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THE STORY OF BURNT NJAL

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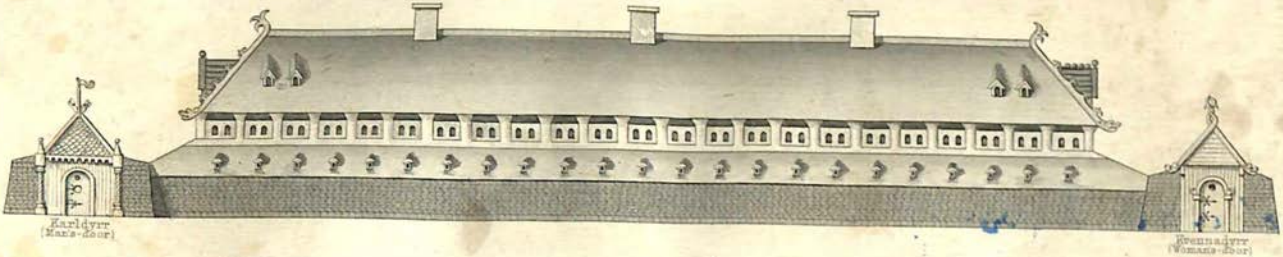
FOR

EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS, EDINBURGH.

LONDON . HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.
CAMBRIDGE . MACMILLAN & CO.
DUBLIN . . W. ROBERTSON.
GLASGOW . . JAMES MACLEHOSE.



FRONT VIEW OF THE OLD ICELANDIC SKÁLI OR HALL.

Edmonston & Douglas, Edinburgh.

THE STORY

OF

BURNT NJAL

OR

LIFE IN ICELAND AT THE END OF THE TENTH CENTURY.

From the Icelandic of the Njals Saga.

BY

GEORGE WEBBE DASENT,

D.C.L.

6041

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, MAPS, AND PLANS.

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH:

EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.

1861.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

PAGE

OF THRAIN : HOW HE SLEW KOL 1

CHAPTER LXXXII.

NJAL'S SONS SAIL ABROAD 6

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

OF KARI SOLMUND'S SON 9

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

OF EARL SIGURD 11

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE BATTLE WITH THE EARLS 14

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

HRAPP'S VOYAGE FROM ICELAND 16

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THRAIN TOOK TO HRAPP 23

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

EARL HACON FIGHTS WITH NJAL'S SONS 34

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

PAGE

NJAL'S SONS AND KARI COME OUT TO ICELAND 40

CHAPTER XC.

THE QUARREL OF NJAL'S SONS WITH THRAIN SIGFUS' SON 41

CHAPTER XCI.

THRAIN SIGFUS' SON'S SLAYING 48

CHAPTER XCII.

KETTLE TAKES HAUSKULD AS HIS FOSTER-SON . . 57

CHAPTER XCIII.

NJAL TAKES HAUSKULD TO FOSTER 59

CHAPTER XCIV.

OF FLOSI, THORD'S SON 60

CHAPTER XCV.

OF HALL OF THE SIDE 62

CHAPTER XCVI.

OF THE CHANGE OF FAITH 63

CHAPTER XCVII.

OF THANGBRAND'S JOURNEYS 66

CHAPTER XCVIII.

OF THANGBRAND AND GUDLEIF 67

CHAPTER XCIX. PAGE

OF GEST ODDLEIF'S SON 73

CHAPTER C.

OF GIZUR THE WHITE AND HJALLTI . 76

CHAPTER CI.

OF THORGEIR OF LIGHTWATER 77

CHAPTER CII.

THE WEDDING OF HAUSKULD, THE PRIEST OF WHITENESS 80

CHAPTER CIII.

THE SLAYING OF HAUSKULD NJAL'S SON 88

CHAPTER CIV.

THE SLAYING OF LYTING'S BROTHERS 94

CHAPTER CV.

OF AMUND THE BLIND 98

CHAPTER CVI.

OF VALGARD THE GUILEFUL 100

CHAPTER CVII.

OF MORD AND NJAL'S SONS 102

CHAPTER CVIII.

OF THE SLANDER OF MORD VALGARD'S SON . . . 104

CHAPTER CIX.

PAGE

OF MORD AND NJAL'S SONS 108

CHAPTER CX.

THE SLAYING OF HAUSKULD, THE PRIEST OF WHITENESS . 110

CHAPTER CXI.

OF HILDIGUNNA AND MORD VALGARD'S SON . . . 112

CHAPTER CXII.

THE PEDIGREE OF GUDMUND THE POWERFUL . . 115

CHAPTER CXIII.

OF SNORRI THE PRIEST, AND HIS STOCK . . . 116

CHAPTER CXIV.

OF FLOSI THORD'S SON 117

CHAPTER CXV.

OF FLOSI AND HILDIGUNNA 121

CHAPTER CXVI.

OF FLOSI AND MORD AND THE SONS OF SIGFUS . . 125

CHAPTER CXVII.

NJAL AND SKARPHEDINN TALK TOGETHER . . . 128

CHAPTER CXVIII.

ASGRIM AND NJAL'S SONS PRAY MEN FOR HELP . . 131

CHAPTER CXIX.

PAGE

OF SKARPHEDINN AND THORKEL FOULMOUTH . . 140

CHAPTER CXX.

OF THE PLEADING OF THE SUIT. 144

CHAPTER CXXI.

OF THE AWARD OF ATONEMENT BETWEEN FLOSI AND NJAL 147

CHAPTER CXXII.

OF THE JUDGES 150

CHAPTER CXXIII.

AN ATTACK PLANNED ON NJAL AND HIS SONS . . 156

CHAPTER CXXIV.

OF PORTENTS 163

CHAPTER CXXV.

FLOSI'S JOURNEY FROM HOME 164

CHAPTER CXXVI.

OF PORTENTS AT BERGTHORSKNOLL 166

CHAPTER CXXVII.

THE ONSLAUGHT ON BERGTHORSKNOLL . . . 168

CHAPTER CXXVIII.

NJAL'S BURNING 172

CHAPTER CXXIX.

PAGE

SKARPHEDINN'S DEATH 180

CHAPTER CXXX.

OF KARI SOLMUND'S SON 188

CHAPTER CXXXI.

NJAL'S AND BERGTHORA'S BONES FOUND . . . 192

CHAPTER CXXXII.

FLOSI'S DREAM 198

CHAPTER CXXXIII.

OF FLOSI'S JOURNEY AND HIS ASKING FOR HELP . . 200

CHAPTER CXXXIV.

OF THORHALL AND KARI 207

CHAPTER CXXXV.

OF FLOSI AND THE BURNERS 214

CHAPTER CXXXVI.

OF THORGEIR CRAGGEIR 218

CHAPTER CXXXVII.

OF EYJOLF BOLVERK'S SON 219

CHAPTER CXXXVIII.

OF ASGRIM, AND GIZUR, AND KARI 227

CHAPTER CXXXIX.

PAGE

OF ASGRIM AND GUDMUND 233

CHAPTER CXL.

OF THE DECLARATIONS OF THE SUITS 235

CHAPTER CXLI.

NOW MEN GO TO THE COURTS 240

CHAPTER CXLII.

OF EYJOLF BOLVERK'S SON 258

CHAPTER CXLIII.

THE COUNSEL OF THORHALL ASGRIM'S SON . . . 260

CHAPTER CXLIV.

BATTLE AT THE ALTHING 270

CHAPTER CXLV.

OF KARI AND THORGEIR 286

CHAPTER CXLVI.

THE AWARD OF ATONEMENT WITH THORGEIR CRAGGEIR . 293

CHAPTER CXLVII.

KARI COMES TO BJORN'S HOUSE IN THE MARK . . 297

CHAPTER CXLVIII.

OF FLOSI AND THE BURNERS 301

CHAPTER CXLIX.

PAGE

OF KARI AND BJORN 306

CHAPTER CL.

MORE OF KARI AND BJORN 311

CHAPTER CLI.

OF KARI AND BJORN AND THORGEIR 315

CHAPTER CLII.

FLOSI GOES ABROAD 319

CHAPTER CLIII.

KARI GOES ABROAD 322

CHAPTER CLIV.

GUNNAR LAMBI'S SON'S SLAYING 325

CHAPTER CLV.

OF SIGNS AND WONDERS 330

CHAPTER CLVI.

BRIAN'S BATTLE 333

CHAPTER CLVII.

THE SLAYING OF KOL THORSTEIN'S SON 344

CHAPTER CLVIII.

OF FLOSI AND KARI 346

APPENDIX.

PAGE

THE VIKINGS 351

QUEEN GUNNHILLDA 377

MONEY AND CURRENCY IN THE TENTH CENTURY . . 397

INDEX 417

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS 499

THE STORY OF BURNT NJAL.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

OF THRAIN: HOW HE SLEW KOL.

Now we must take up the story, and say how Thrain Sigfus' son came to Norway. They made the land north in Helgeland, and held on south to Drontheim, and so to Hlada.* But as soon as Earl Hacon heard of that, he sent men to them, and would know what men were in the ship. They came back and told him who the men were. Then the Earl sent for Thrain Sigfus' son, and he went to see him. The Earl asked of what stock he might be. He said that he was Gunnar of Lithend's near kinsman. The Earl said—

* Hlada or Lada, and sometimes in the plural Ladir, was the old capital of Drontheim, before Nidaros—the present Drontheim—was founded. Drontheim was originally the name of the country round the firth of the same name, and is not used in the old Sagas for a town.

"That shall stand thee in good stead; for I have seen many men from Iceland, but none his match."

"Lord," said Thrain, "is it your will that I should be with you this winter?"

The Earl took to him, and Thrain was there that winter, and was thought much of.

There was a man named Kol, he was a great sea-rover. He was the son of Asmund Ashside, east out of Smoland. He lay east in the Göta-Elf, and had five ships, and much force.

Thence Kol steered his course out of the river to Norway, and landed at Fold,* in the bight of the "Bay," and came on Hallvard Soti unawares, and found him in a loft. He kept them off bravely till they set fire to the house, then he gave himself up; but they slew him, and took there much goods, and sailed thence to Lödese.†

Earl Hacon heard these tidings, and made them make Kol an outlaw over all his realm, and set a price upon his head.

Once on a time it so happened that the Earl began to speak thus—

* The country round the Christiania Firth, at the top of "the Bay."

† A town in Sweden on the Göta-Elf.

"Too far off from us now is Gunnar of Lithend. He would slay my outlaw if he were here; but now the Icelanders will slay him, and it is ill that he hath not fared to us."

Then Thrain Sigfus' son answered,—

"I am not Gunnar, but still I am near akin to him, and I will undertake this voyage."

The Earl said, "I should be glad of that, and thou shalt be very well fitted out for the journey."

After that his son Eric began to speak, and said,—

"Your word, father, is good to many men, but fulfilling it is quite another thing. This is the hardest undertaking; for this sea-rover is tough and ill to deal with, wherefore thou wilt need to take great pains, both as to men and ships for this voyage."

Thrain said, "I will set out on this voyage, though it looks ugly."

After that the Earl gave him five ships, and all well trimmed and manned. Along with Thrain was Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son. Gunnar was Thrain's brother's son, and had come to him young, and each loved the other much.

Eric, the Earl's son, went heartily along with them, and looked after strength for them, both in men and weapons, and made such changes in them as he thought

were needful. After they were "boun," Eric got them a pilot. Then they sailed south along the land; but wherever they came to land, the Earl allowed them to deal with whatever they needed as their own.

So they held on east to Lödese, and then they heard that Kol was gone to Denmark. Then they shaped their course south thither; but when they came south to Helsingborg, they met men in a boat, who said that Kol was there just before them, and would be staying there for a while.

One day when the weather was good, Kol saw the ships as they sailed up towards him, and said he had dreamt of Earl Hacon the night before, and told his people he was sure these must be his men, and bade them all to take their weapons.

After that they busked them, and a fight arose; and they fought long, so that neither side had the mastery.

Then Kol sprang up on Thrain's ship, and cleared the gangways fast, and slays many men. He had a gilded helm.

Now Thrain sees that this is no good, and now he eggs on his men to go along with him, but he himself goes first and meets Kol.

Kol hews at him, and the blow fell on Thrain's shield, and cleft it down from top to bottom. Then Kol got a

blow on the arm from a stone, and then down fell his sword.

Thrain hews at Kol, and the stroke came on his leg so that it cut it off. After that they slew Kol, and Thrain cut off his head, and they threw the trunk overboard, but kept his head.

There they took much spoil, and then they held on north to Drontheim, and go to see the Earl.

The Earl gave Thrain a hearty welcome, and he shewed the Earl Kol's head, but the Earl thanked him for that deed.

Eric said it was worth more than words alone, and the Earl said so it was, and bade them come along with him.

They went thither, where the Earl had made them make a good ship that was not made like a common long-ship. It had a vulture's head, and was much carved and painted.

"Thou art a great man for show, Thrain," said the Earl, "and so have both of you, kinsmen, been, Gunnar and thou; and now I will give thee this ship, but it is called the 'Vulture.' Along with it shall go my friendship; and my will is that thou stayest with me as long as thou wilt."

He thanked him for his goodness, and said he had no longing to go to Iceland just yet.

The Earl had a journey to make to the marches of the land to meet the Swede-king. Thrain went with him that summer, and was a shipmaster and steered the Vulture, and sailed so fast that few could keep up with him, and he was much envied. But it always came out that the Earl laid great store on Gunnar, for he set down sternly all who tried Thrain's temper.

So Thrain was all that winter with the Earl, but next spring the Earl asked Thrain whether he would stay there or fare to Iceland; but Thrain said he had not yet made up his mind, and said that he wished first to know tidings from Iceland.

The Earl said that so it should be as he thought it suited him best; and Thrain was with the Earl.

Then those tidings were heard from Iceland, which many thought great news, the death of Gunnar of Lithend. Then the Earl would not that Thrain should fare out to Iceland, and so there he stayed with him.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

NJAL'S SONS SAIL ABROAD.

Now it must be told how Njal's sons, Grim and Helgi, left Iceland the same summer that Thrain and his fel-

lows went away; and in the ship with them were Olaf Kettle's son of Elda, and Bard the black. They got so strong a wind from the north that they were driven south into the main; and so thick a mist came over them that they could not tell whither they were driving, and they were out a long while. At last they came to where was a great ground sea, and thought then they must be near land. So then Njal's sons asked Bard if he could tell at all to what land they were likely to be nearest.

"Many lands there are," said he, "which we might hit with the weather we have had—the Orkneys, or Scotland, or Ireland."

Two nights after, they saw land on both boards, and a great surf running up in the firth. They cast anchor outside the breakers, and the wind began to fall; and next morning it was calm. Then they see thirteen ships coming out to them.

Then Bard spoke and said, "What counsel shall we take now, for these men are going to make an onslaught on us?"

So they took counsel whether they should defend themselves or yield, but before they could make up their minds, the Vikings were upon them. Then each side asked the other their names, and what their

leaders were called. So the leaders of the chapmen told their names, and asked back who led that host. One called himself Gritgard, and the other Snowcolf, sons of Moldan of Duncansby in Scotland, kinsmen of Malcolm the Scot king.

"And now," says Gritgard, "we have laid down two choices, one that ye go on shore, and we will take your goods; the other is, that we fall on you and slay every man that we can catch."

"The will of the chapmen," answers Helgi, "is to defend themselves."

But the chapmen called out, "Wretch that thou art to speak thus! What defence can we make? Lading is less than life."

But Grim, he fell upon a plan to shout out to the Vikings, and would not let them hear the bad choice of the chapmen.

Then Bard and Olaf said, "Think ye not that these Icelanders will make game of you sluggards; take rather your weapons and guard your goods."

So they all seized their weapons, and bound themselves, one with another, never to give up so long as they had strength to fight.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

OF KARI SOLMUND'S SON.

THEN the Vikings shot at them and the fight began, and the chapmen guard themselves well. Snowcolf sprang aboard and at Olaf, and thrust his spear through his body, but Grim thrust at Snowcolf with his spear, and so stoutly, that he fell overboard. Then Helgi turned to meet Grim, and they two drove down all the Vikings as they tried to board, and Njal's sons were ever where there was most need. Then the Vikings called out to the chapmen and bade them give up, but they said they would never yield. Just then some one looked seaward, and there they see ships coming from the south round the Ness, and they were not fewer than ten, and they row hard and steer thitherwards. Along their sides were shield on shield, but on that ship that came first stood a man by the mast, who was clad in a silken kirtle, and had a gilded helm, and his hair was both fair and thick; that man had a spear inlaid with gold in his hand.

He asked, "who have here such an uneven game?"

Helgi tells his name, and said that against them are Gritgard and Snowcolf.

"But who are your captains?" he asks.

Helgi answered, "Bard the black, who lives, but the other, who is dead and gone, was called Olaf."

"Are ye men from Iceland?" says he.

"Sure enough we are," Helgi answers.

He asked whose sons they were, and they told him, then he knew them and said,

"Well known names have ye all, father and sons both."

"Who art thou?" asks Helgi.

"My name is Kari, and I am Solmund's son."

"Whence comest thou?" says Helgi.

"From the Southern Isles."

"Then thou art welcome," says Helgi, "if thou wilt give us a little help."

"I'll give ye all the help ye need," says Kari; "but what do ye ask?"

"To fall on them," says Helgi.

Kari says that so it shall be. So they pulled up to them, and then the battle began the second time; but when they had fought a little while, Kari springs up on Snowcolf's ship; he turns to meet him and smites at him with his sword. Kari leaps nimbly backwards

over a beam that lay athwart the ship, and Snowcolf smote the beam so that both edges of the sword were hidden. Then Kari smites at him, and the sword fell on his shoulder, and the stroke was so mighty that he cleft in twain shoulder, arm, and all, and Snowcolf got his death there and then. Gritgard hurled a spear at Kari, but Kari saw it and sprang up aloft, and the spear missed him. Just then Helgi and Grim came up both to meet Kari, and Helgi springs on Gritgard and thrusts his spear through him, and that was his death blow; after that they went round the whole ship on both boards, and then men begged for mercy. So they gave them all peace, but took all their goods. After that they ran all the ships out under the islands.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

OF EARL SIGURD.

SIGURD was the name of an earl who ruled over the Orkneys; he was the son of Hlodver, the son of Thorfinn the scull-splitter, the son of Turf-Einar, the son of Rognvald, Earl of Mœren, the son of Eystein the noisy. Kari was one of Earl Sigurd's body-guard, and had just been gathering scatts in the Southern Isles from Earl

Gilli. Now Kari asks them to go to Hrossey,* and said the Earl would take to them well. They agreed to that, and went with Kari and came to Hrossey. Kari led them to see the Earl, and said what men they were.

"How came they," says the Earl, "to fall upon thee?"

"I found them," says Kari, "in Scotland's Firths, and they were fighting with the sons of Earl Moldan, and held their own so well that they threw themselves about between the bulwarks, from side to side, and were always there where the trial was greatest, and now I ask you to give them quarters among your body-guard."

"It shall be as thou choosest," says the Earl, "thou hast already taken them so much by the hand."

Then they were there with the Earl that winter, and were worthily treated, but Helgi was silent as the winter wore on. The Earl could not tell what was at the bottom of that, and asked why he was so silent, and what was on his mind. "Thinkest thou it not good to be here?"

"Good, methinks, it is here," he says.

"Then what art thou thinking about?" asks the Earl.

"Hast thou any realm to guard in Scotland?" asks Helgi.

* The mainland of Orkney, now Pomona.

"So we think," says the Earl, "but what makes thee think about that, or what is the matter with it?"

"The Scots," says Helgi, "must have taken your steward's life, and stopped all the messengers, that none should cross the Pentland Firth."

"Hast thou the second sight?" said the Earl.

"That has been little proved," answers Helgi.

"Well," says the Earl, "I will increase thy honour if this be so, otherwise thou shalt smart for it."

"Nay," says Kari, "Helgi is not that kind of man, and like enough his words are sooth, for his father has the second sight."

After that the Earl sent men south to Straumey* to Arnljot, his steward there, and after that Arnljot sent them across the Pentland Firth, and they spied out and learnt that Earl Hundi and Earl Melsnati had taken the life of Havard in Thraswick, Earl Sigurd's brother-in-law. So Arnljot sent word to Earl Sigurd to come south with a great host and drive those earls out of his realm, and as soon as the Earl heard that, he gathered together a mighty host from all the isles.

* Now Stroma, in the Pentland Firth.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE BATTLE WITH THE EARLS.

AFTER that the Earl set out south with his host, and Kari went with him, and Njal's sons too. They came south to Caithness. The Earl had these realms in Scotland, Ross and Moray, Sutherland, and the Dales. There came to meet them men from those realms, and said that the Earls were a short way off with a great host. Then Earl Sigurd turns his host thither, and the name of that place is Duncansness, above which they met, and it came to a great battle between them. Now the Scots had let some of their host go free from the main battle, and these took the Earl's men in flank, and many men fell there till Njal's sons turned against the foe, and fought with them and put them to flight; but still it was a hard fight, and then Njal's sons turned back to the front by the Earl's standard, and fought well. Now Kari turns to meet Earl Melsnati, and Melsnati hurled a spear at him, but Kari caught the spear and threw it back and through the Earl. Then Earl Hundi fled, but they chased the fleers until they learnt that Malcolm was gathering a host at Duncansby. Then the Earl took

counsel with his men, and it seemed to all the best plan to turn back, and not to fight with such a mighty land force; so they turned back. But when the Earl came to Straumey they shared the battle-spoil. After that he went north to Hrossey, and Njal's sons and Kari followed him. Then the Earl made a great feast, and at that feast he gave Kari a good sword, and a spear inlaid with gold; but he gave Helgi a gold ring and a mantle, and Grim a shield and sword. After that he took Helgi and Grim into his body-guard, and thanked them for their good help. They were with the Earl that winter and the summer after, till Kari went sea-roving; then they went with him, and harried far and wide that summer, and everywhere won the victory. They fought against Godred, King of Man, and conquered him; and after that they fared back, and had gotten much goods. Next winter they were still with the Earl, and when the spring came Njal's sons asked leave to go to Norway. The Earl said they should go or not as they pleased, and he gave them a good ship and smart men. As for Kari, he said he must come that summer to Norway with Earl Hacon's. scatts, and then they would meet; and so it fell out that they gave each other their word to meet. After that Njal's sons put out to sea and sailed for Norway, and made the land north near Drontheim.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

HRAPP'S VOYAGE FROM ICELAND.

THERE was a man named Kolbein, and his surname was Arnljot's son; he was a man from Drontheim; he sailed out to Iceland that same summer in which Kolskegg and Njal's sons went abroad. He was that winter east in Broaddale; but the spring after, he made his ship ready for sea in Gautawick; and when men were almost "boun," a man rowed up to them in a boat, and made the boat fast to the ship, and afterwards he went on board the ship to see Kolbein.

Kolbein asked that man for his name.

"My name is Hrapp," says he.

"What wilt thou with me?" says Kolbein.

"I wish to ask thee to put me across the Iceland main."

"Whose son art thou?" asks Kolbein.

"I am a son of Aurgunleid, the son of Geirolf the fighter."

"What need lies on thee," asked Kolbein, "to drive thee abroad?"

"I have slain a man," says Hrapp.

"What manslaughter was that," says Kolbein, "and what men have the blood-feud?"

"The men of Weaponfirth," says Hrapp, "but the man I slew was Aurlyg, the son of Aurlyg, the son of Roger the white."

"I guess this," says Kolbein, "that he will have the worst of it who bears thee abroad."

"I am the friend of my friend," said Hrapp, "but when ill is done to me I repay it. Nor am I short of money to lay down for my passage."

Then Kolbein took Hrapp on board, and a little while after a fair breeze sprung up, and they sailed away on the sea.

Hrapp ran short of food at sea, and then he sate him down at the mess of those who were nearest to him. They sprang up with ill words, and so it was that they came to blows, and Hrapp, in a trice, has two men under him.

Then Kolbein was told, and he bade Hrapp to come and share his mess, and he accepted that.

Now they come off the sea, and lie outside off Agdirness.

Then Kolbein asked where that money was which he had offered to pay for his fare?

"It is out in Iceland," answers Hrapp.

"Thou wilt beguile more men than me, I fear," says Kolbein; "but now I will forgive thee all the fare."

Hrapp bade him have thanks for that. "But what counsel dost thou give as to what I ought to do?"

"That first of all," he says, "that thou goest from the ship as soon as ever thou canst, for all Easterlings will bear thee bad witness; but there is yet another bit of good counsel which I will give thee, and that is, never to cheat thy master."

Then Hrapp went on shore with his weapons, and he had a great axe with an iron-bound haft in his hand.

He fares on and on till he comes to Gudbrand of the Dale. He was the greatest friend of Earl Hacon. They two had a shrine between them, and it was never opened but when the Earl came thither. That was the second greatest shrine in Norway, but the other was at Hlada.

Thrand was the name of Gudbrand's son, but his daughter's name was Gudruna.

Hrapp went in before Gudbrand, and hailed him well.

He asked whence he came and what was his name. Hrapp told him about himself, and how he had sailed abroad from Iceland.

After that he asks Gudbrand to take him into his household as a guest.

"It does not seem," said Gudbrand, "to look on thee, as though thou wert a man to bring good luck."

"Methinks, then," says Hrapp, "that all I have heard about thee has been great lies; for it is said that thou takest every one into thy house that asks thee; and that no man is thy match for goodness and kindness, far or near; but now I shall have to speak against that saying, if thou dost not take me in."

"Well, thou shalt stay here," said Gudbrand.

"To what seat wilt thou shew me?" says Hrapp.

"To one on the lower bench, over against my high seat."

Then Hrapp went and took his seat. He was able to tell of many things, and so it was at first that Gudbrand and many thought it sport to listen to him; but still it came about that most men thought him too much given to mocking, and the end of it was that he took to talking alone with Gudruna, so that many said that he meant to beguile her.

But when Gudbrand was aware of that, he scolded her much for daring to talk alone with him, and bade her beware of speaking aught to him if the whole household did not hear it. She gave her word to be good at first, but still it was soon the old story over again as to their talk. Then Gudbrand got Asvard, his overseer, to

go about with her, out of doors and in, and to be with her wherever she went. One day it happened that she begged for leave to go into the nut-wood for a pastime, and Asvard went along with her. Hrapp goes to seek for them and found them, and took her by the hand, and led her away alone.

Then Asvard went to look for her, and found them both together stretched on the grass in a thicket.

He rushes at them, axe in air, and smote at Hrapp's leg, but Hrapp gave himself a sudden turn, and he missed him. Hrapp springs on his feet as quick as he can, and caught up his axe. Then Asvard wished to turn and get away, but Hrapp hewed asunder his back-bone.

Then Gudruna said, "Now hast thou done that deed which will hinder thy stay any longer with my father; but still there is something behind which he will like still less, for I go with child."

"He shall not learn this from others," says Hrapp, "but I will go home and tell him both these tidings."

"Then," she says, "thou wilt not come away with thy life."

"I will run the risk of that," he says.

After that he sees her back to the other women, but he went home. Gudbrand sat in his high seat, and there were few men in the room.

Hrapp went in before him, and bore his axe high.

"Why is thine axe bloody?" asks Gudbrand.

"I made it so by doing a piece of work on thy overseer Asvard's back," says Hrapp.

"That can be no good work," says Gudbrand; "thou must have slain him."

"So it is, be sure," says Hrapp.

"What did ye fall out about?" asks Gudbrand.

"Oh!" says Hrapp, "what you would think small cause enough. He wanted to hew off my leg."

"What hadst thou done first?" asked Gudbrand.

"What he had no right to meddle with," says Hrapp.

"Still thou wilt tell me what it was."

"Well!" said Hrapp, "if thou must know, I lay by thy daughter's side, and he thought that bad."

"Up men!" cried Gudbrand, "and take him. He shall be slain out of hand."

"Very little good wilt thou let me reap of my son-in-law-ship," says Hrapp, "but thou hast not so many men at thy back as to do that speedily."

Up they rose, but he sprang out of doors. They run after him, but he got away to the wood, and they could not lay hold of him.

Then Gudbrand gathers people, and lets the wood be

searched; but they find him not, for the wood was great and thick.

Hrapp fares through the wood till he came to a clearing; there he found a house, and saw a man outside cleaving wood.

He asked that man for his name, and he said his name was Tofi.

Tofi asked him for his name in turn, and Hrapp told him his true name.

Hrapp asked why the householder had set up his abode so far from other men?

"For that here," he says, "I think I am less likely to have brawls with other men."

"It is strange how we beat about the bush in our talk," says Hrapp, "but I will first tell thee who I am. I have been with Gudbrand of the Dale, but I ran away thence because I slew his overseer; but now I know that we are both of us bad men; for thou wouldst not have come hither away from other men unless thou wert some man's outlaw. And now I give thee two choices, either that I will tell where thou art, or that we two have between us, share and share alike, all that is here."

"This is even as thou sayest," said the householder; "I seized and carried off this woman who is here with me, and many men have sought for me."

Then he led Hrapp in with him ; there was a small house there, but well built.

The master of the house told his mistress that he had taken Hrapp into his company.

"Most men will get ill luck from this man," she says ; "but thou wilt have thy way."

So Hrapp was there after that. He was a great wanderer, and was never at home. He still brings about meetings with Gudruna ; her father and brother, Thrand and Gudbrand, lay in wait for him, but they could never get nigh him, and so all that year passed away.

Gudbrand sent and told Earl Hacon what trouble he had had with Hrapp, and the Earl let him be made an outlaw, and laid a price upon his head. He said too, that he would go himself to look after him ; but that passed off, and the Earl thought it easy enough for them to catch him when he went about so unwarily.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THRAIN TOOK TO HRAPP.

THAT same summer Njal's sons fared to Norway from the Orkneys, as was before written, and they were there at the fair during the summer. Then Thrain Sigfus'

son busked his ship for Iceland, and was all but "boun." At that time Earl Hacon went to a feast at Gudbrand's house. That night Killing-Hrapp came to the shrine of Earl Hacon and Gudbrand, and he went inside the house, and there he saw Thorgerda Shrinebride sitting, and she was as tall as a fullgrown man. She had a great gold ring on her arm, and a wimple on her head; he strips her of her wimple, and takes the gold ring from off her. Then he sees Thor's car, and takes from him a second gold ring; a third he took from Irpa; and then dragged them all out, and spoiled them of all their gear.

After that he laid fire to the shrine, and burnt it down, and then he goes away just as it began to dawn. He walks across a ploughed field, and there six men sprang up with weapons, and fall upon him at once; but he made a stout defence, and the end of the business was that he slays three men, but wounds Thrand to the death, and drives two to the woods, so that they could bear no news to the Earl. He then went up to Thrand and said,

"It is now in my power to slay thee if I will, but I will not do that; and now I will set more store by the ties that are between us than ye have shewn to me."

Now Hrapp means to turn back to the wood, but

now he sees that men have come between him and the wood, so he dares not venture to turn thither, but lays him down in a thicket, and so lies there a while.

Earl Hacon and Gudbrand went that morning early to the shrine and found it burnt down; but the three gods were outside, stripped of all their bravery.

Then Gudbrand began to speak, and said,

"Much might is given to our gods, when here they have walked of themselves out of the fire!"

"The gods can have naught to do with it," says the Earl; "a man must have burnt the shrine, and borne the gods out; but the gods do not avenge everything on the spot. That man who has done this will no doubt be driven away out of Valhalla, and never come in thither."

Just then up ran four of the Earl's men, and told them ill tidings; for they said they had found three men slain in the field, and Thrand wounded to the death.

"Who can have done this?" says the Earl.

"Killing-Hrapp," they say.

"Then he must have burnt down the shrine," says the Earl.

They said they thought he was like enough to have done it.

"And where may he be now?" says the Earl.

They said that Thrand had told them that he had lain down in a thicket.

The Earl goes thither to look for him, but Hrapp was off and away. Then the Earl set his men to search for him, but still they could not find him. So the Earl was in the hue and cry himself, but first he bade them rest a while.

Then the Earl went aside by himself, away from other men, and bade that no man should follow him, and so he stays a while. He fell down on both his knees, and held his hands before his eyes ; after that he went back to them, and then he said to them, "Come with me."

So they went along with him. He turns short away from the path on which they had walked before, and they came to a dell. There up sprang Hrapp before them, and there it was that he had hidden himself at first.

The Earl urges on his men to run after him, but Hrapp was so swift-footed that they never came near him. Hrapp made for Hlada. There both Thrain and Njal's sons lay "boun" for sea at the same time. Hrapp runs to where Njal's sons are.

"Help me, like good men and true," he said, "for the Earl will slay me."

Helgi looked at him, and said,

"Thou lookest like an unlucky man, and the man who will not take thee in will have the best of it."

"Would that the worst might befall you from me," says Hrapp.

"I am the man," says Helgi, "to avenge me on thee for this as time rolls on."

Then Hrapp turned to Thrain Sigfus' son, and bade him shelter him.

"What hast thou on thy hand?" says Thrain.

"I have burnt a shrine under the Earl's eyes, and slain some men, and now he will be here speedily, for he has joined in the hue and cry himself."

"It hardly beseems me to do this," says Thrain, when the Earl has done me so much good."

Then he shewed Thrain the precious things which he had borne out of the shrine, and offered to give him the goods, but Thrain said he could not take them unless he gave him other goods of the same worth for them.

"Then," said Hrapp, "here will I take my stand, and here shall I be slain before thine eyes, and then thou wilt have to abide by every man's blame."

Then they see the Earl and his band of men coming, and then Thrain took Hrapp under his safeguard, and let them shove off the boat, and put out to his ship.

Then Thrain said, "Now this will be thy best hiding place, to knock out the bottoms of two casks, and then thou shalt get into them."

So it was done, and he got into the casks, and then they were lashed together, and lowered overboard.

Then comes the Earl with his band to Njal's sons, and asked if Hrapp had come there.

They said that he had come.

The Earl asked whither he had gone thence?

They said they had not kept eyes on him, and could not say.

"He," said the Earl, "should have great honour from me who would tell me where Hrapp was."

Then Grim said softly to Helgi,

"Why should we not say, What know I whether Thrain will repay us with any good?"

"We should not tell a whit more for that," says Helgi, "when his life lies at stake."

"May be," said Grim, "the Earl will turn his vengeance on us, for he is so wroth that some one will have to fall before him."

"That must not move us," says Helgi, "but still we will pull our ship out, and so away to sea as soon as ever we get a wind."

So they rowed out under an isle that lay there, and wait there for a fair breeze.

The Earl went about among the sailors, and tried them all, but they, one and all, denied that they knew aught of Hrapp.

Then the Earl said, "Now we will go to Thrain, my brother in arms, and he will give Hrapp up, if he knows anything of him."

After that they took a long-ship and went off to the merchant ship.

Thrain sees the Earl coming, and stands up and greets him kindly. The Earl took his greeting well and spoke thus:—

"We are seeking for a man whose name is Hrapp, and he is an Icelander. He has done us all kind of ill; and now we will ask you to be good enough to give him up, or to tell us where he is."

"Ye know, Lord," said Thrain, "that I slew your outlaw, and then put my life in peril, and for that I had of you great honour."

"More honour shalt thou now have," says the Earl.

Now Thrain thought within himself, and could not make up his mind how the Earl would take it, so he denies that Hrapp is there, and bade the Earl to look for him. He spent little time on that, and went on

land alone, away from other men, and was then very wroth, so that no man dared to speak to him.

"Shew me to Njal's sons," said the Earl, "and I will force them to tell me the truth."

Then he was told that they had put out of the harbour.

"Then there is no help for it," says the Earl, "but still there were two water-casks alongside of Thrain's ship, and in them a man may well have been hid, and if Thrain has hidden him, there he must be; and now we will go a second time to see Thrain."

Thrain sees that the Earl means to put off again and said,—

"However wroth the Earl was last time, now he will be half as wroth again, and now the life of every man on board the ship lies at stake."

They all gave their words to hide the matter, for they were all sore afraid. Then they took some sacks out of the lading, and put Hrapp down into the hold in their stead, and other sacks that were light were laid over him.

Now comes the Earl, just as they were done stowing Hrapp away. Thrain greeted the Earl well. The Earl was rather slow to return it, and they saw that the Earl was very wroth.

Then said the Earl to Thrain—

"Give thou up Hrapp, for I am quite sure that thou hast hidden him."

"Where shall I have hidden him, Lord?" says Thrain.

"That thou knowest best," says the Earl; "but if I must guess, then I think that thou hiddest him in the water-casks a while ago."

"Well!" says Thrain, "I would rather not be taken for a liar, far sooner would I that ye should search the ship."

Then the Earl went on board the ship and hunted and hunted, but found him not."

"Dost thou speak me free now?" says Thrain.

"Far from it," says the Earl, "and yet I cannot tell why we cannot find him, but methinks I see through it all when I come on shore, but when I come here, I can see nothing."

With that he made them row him ashore. He was so wroth that there was no speaking to him. His son Sweyn was there with him, and he said, "A strange turn of mind this to let guiltless men smart for one's wrath!"

Then the Earl went away alone aside from other men, and after that he went back to them at once, and said—

"Let us row out to them again," and they did so.

"Where can he have been hidden?" says Sweyn.

"There's not much good in knowing that," says the Earl, for now he will be away thence; two sacks lay there by the rest of the lading, and Hrapp must have come into the lading in their place."

"Then Thrain began to speak, and said—

"They are running off the ship again, and they must mean to pay us another visit. Now we will take him out of the lading, and stow other things in his stead, but let the sacks still lie loose. They did so, and then Thrain spoke:—

"Now let us fold Hrapp in the sail."

It was then brailed up to the yard, and they did so.

Then the Earl comes to Thrain and his men, and he was very wroth, and said, "Wilt thou now give up the man, Thrain?" and he is worse now than before.

"I would have given him up long ago," answers Thrain, "if he had been in my keeping, or where can he have been?"

"In the lading," says the Earl.

"Then why did ye not seek him there?" says Thrain.

"That never came into our mind," says the Earl.

After that they sought him over all the ship, and found him not.

"Will you now hold me free?" says Thrain.

"Surely not," says the Earl, "for I know that thou hast hidden away the man, though I find him not; but I would rather that thou shouldest be a dastard to me than I to thee," says the Earl, and then they went on shore.

"Now," says the Earl, "I seem to see that Thrain has hidden away Hrapp in the sail."

Just then, up sprung a fair breeze, and Thrain and his men sailed out to sea. He then spoke these words which have long been held in mind since,

"Let us make the Vulture fly,
Nothing now gars Thrain flinch."

But when the Earl heard of Thrain's words, then he said,

"'Tis not my want of foresight which caused this, but rather their ill-fellowship, which will drag them both to death."

Thrain was a short time out on the sea, and so came to Iceland, and fared home to his house. Hrapp went along with Thrain, and was with him that year; but the spring after, Thrain got him a homestead at Hrappstede, and he dwelt there; but yet he spent most of his time at Gritwater. He was thought to spoil everything

there, and some men even said that he was too good friends with Hallgerda, and that he led her astray, but some spoke against that.

Thrain gave the Vulture to his kinsman, Mord the reckless; that Mord slew Oddi Haldor's son, east in Gautawick by Berufirth.

All Thrain's kinsmen looked on him as a chief.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

EARL HACON FIGHTS WITH NJAL'S SONS.

Now we must take up the story, and say how, when Earl Hacon missed Thrain, he spoke to Sweyn his son, and said,—

Let us take four long-ships, and let us fare against Njal's sons and slay them, for they must have known all about it with Thrain."

"'Tis not good counsel," says Sweyn, "to throw the blame on guiltless men, but to let him escape who is guilty."

"I shall have my way in this," says the Earl.

Now they hold on after Njal's sons, and seek for them, and find them under an island.

Grim first saw the Earl's ships and said to Helgi,

"Here are war ships sailing up, and I see that here is the Earl, and he can mean to offer us no peace."

"It is said," said Helgi, "that he is the boldest man who holds his own against all comers, and so we will defend ourselves."

They all bade him take the course he thought best, and then they took to their arms.

Now the Earl comes up and called out to them, and bade them give themselves up.

Helgi said that they would defend themselves so long as they could.

Then the Earl offered peace and quarter to all who would neither defend themselves nor Helgi; but Helgi was so much beloved that all said they would rather die with him.

Then the Earl and his men fall on them, but they defended themselves well, and Njal's sons were ever where there was most need. The Earl often offered peace, but they all made the same answer, and said they would never yield.

Then Aslak of Longisle pressed them hard, and came on board their ship thrice. Then Grim said,

"Thou pressest on hard, and 'twere well that thou gettest what thou seekest;" and with that he snatched

up a spear and hurled it at him, and hit him under the chin, and Aslak got his death wound there and then.

A little after, Helgi slew Egil the Earl's banner-bearer.

Then Sweyn, Earl Hacon's son, fell on them, and made men hem them in and bear them down with shields, and so they were taken captive.

The Earl was for letting them all be slain at once, but Sweyn said that should not be, and said too that it was night.

Then the Earl said, "Well, then, slay them to-morrow, but bind them fast to-night."

"So, I ween, it must be," says Sweyn; "but never yet have I met brisker men than these, and I call it the greatest manscathe to take their lives."

"They have slain two of our briskest men," said the Earl, "and for that they shall be slain."

"Because they were brisker men themselves," says Sweyn; "but still in this it must be done as thou willest."

So they were bound and fettered.

After that the Earl fell asleep; but when all men slept, Grim spoke to Helgi, and said, "Away would I get if I could."

"Let us try some trick then," says Helgi.

Grim sees that there lies an axe edge up, so Grim

crawled thither, and gets the bowstring which bound him cut asunder against the axe, but still he got great wounds on his arms.

Then he set Helgi loose, and after that they crawled over the ship's side, and got on shore, so that neither Hacon nor his men were ware of them. Then they broke off their fetters, and walked away to the other side of the island. By that time it began to dawn. There they found a ship, and knew that there was come Kari Solmund's son. They went at once to meet him, and told him of their wrongs and hardships, and shewed him their wounds, and said the Earl would be then asleep.

"Ill is it," said Kari, "that ye should suffer such wrongs for wicked men; but what now would be most to your minds?"

"To fall on the Earl," they say, "and slay him."

"This will not be fated," says Kari; "but still ye do not lack heart, but we will first know whether he is there now."

After that they fared thither, and then the Earl was up and away.

Then Kari sailed in to Hlada to meet the Earl, and brought him the Orkney scatts; so the Earl said,

"Hast thou taken Njal's sons into thy keeping?"

"So it is, sure enough," says Kari.

"Wilt thou hand Njal's sons over to me?" asks the Earl.

"No, I will not," said Kari.

"Wilt thou swear this," says the Earl, "that thou wilt not fall on me with Njal's sons?"

Then Eric, the Earl's son, spoke and said—

"Such things ought not to be asked. Kari has always been our friend, and things should not have gone as they have, had I been by. Njal's sons should have been set free from all blame, but they should have had chastisement who had wrought for it. Methinks now it would be more seemly to give Njal's sons good gifts for the hardships and wrongs which have been put upon them, and the wounds they have got."

"So it ought to be, sure enough," says the Earl, "but I know not whether they will take an atonement."

Then the Earl said that Kari should try the feeling of Njal's sons as to an atonement.

After that Kari spoke to Helgi, and asked whether he would take any amends from the Earl or not.

"I will take them," said Helgi, "from his son Eric, but I will have nothing to do with the Earl."

Then Kari told Eric their answer.

"So it shall be," says Eric. "He shall take the

amends from me if he thinks it better; and tell them this too, that I bid them to my house, and my father shall do them no harm."

This bidding they took, and went to Eric's house, and were with him till Kari was ready to sail west across the sea to meet Earl Sigurd.

Then Eric made a feast for Kari, and gave him gifts, and Njal's sons gifts too. After that Kari fared west across the sea, and met Earl Sigurd, and he greeted them very well, and they were with the Earl that winter.

But when the spring came, Kari asked Njal's sons to go on warfare with him, but Grim said they would only do so if he would fare with them afterwards out to Iceland. Kari gave his word to do that, and then they fared with him a-sea-roving. They harried south about Anglesea and all the Southern isles. Thence they held on to Cantyre, and landed there, and fought with the landsmen, and got thence much goods, and so fared to their ships. Thence they fared south to Wales, and harried there. Then they held on for Man, and there they met Godred, and fought with him, and got the victory, and slew Dungal the king's son. There they took great spoil. Thence they held on north to Coll, and found Earl Gilli there, and he greeted them well, and there they stayed with him a while. The Earl

fared with them to the Orkneys to meet Earl Sigurd, but next spring Earl Sigurd gave away his sister Nereida to Earl Gilli, and then he fared back to the Southern isles.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

NJAL'S SONS AND KARI COME OUT TO ICELAND.

THAT summer Kari and Njal's sons busked them for Iceland, and when they were "all-boun" they went to see the Earl. The Earl gave them good gifts, and they parted with great friendship.

Now they put to sea and have a short passage, and they got a fine fair breeze, and made the land at Eyrar. Then they got them horses and ride from the ship to Bergthorsknoll, but when they came home all men were glad to see them. They flitted home their goods and laid up the ship, and Kari was there that winter with Njal.

But the spring after, Kari asked for Njal's daughter, Helga, to wife, and Helgi and Grim backed his suit; and so the end of it was that she was betrothed to Kari, and the day for the wedding-feast was fixed, and the feast was held half a month before mid-summer, and they were that winter with Njal.

Then Kari bought him land at Dyrholms, east away by Mydale, and set up a farm there; they put in there a grieve and housekeeper to see after the farm, but they themselves were ever with Njal.

CHAPTER XC.

THE QUARREL OF NJAL'S SONS WITH THRAIN SIGFUS' SON.

HRAPP owned a farm at Hrappstede, but for all that he was always at Gritwater, and he was thought to spoil everything there. Thrain was good to him.

Once on a time it happened that Kettle of the Mark was at Bergthorsknoll; then Njal's sons told him of their wrongs and hardships, and said they had much to lay at Thrain Sigfus' son's door, whenever they chose to speak about it.

Njal said it would be best that Kettle should talk with his brother Thrain about it, and he gave his word to do so.

So they gave Kettle breathing-time to talk to Thrain.

A little after they spoke of the matter again to Kettle, but he said that he would repeat few of the words that had passed between them, "for it was pretty plain that

Thrain thought I set too great store on being your brother-in-law."

Then they dropped talking about it, and thought they saw that things looked ugly, and so they asked their father for his counsel as to what was to be done, but they told him they would not let things rest as they then stood.

"Such things," said Njal, "are not so strange. It will be thought that they are slain without a cause, if they are slain now, and my counsel is, that as many men as may be should be brought to talk with them about these things, that thus as many as we can find may be ear-witnesses if they answer ill as to these things. Then Kari shall talk about them too, for he is just the man with the right turn of mind for this; then the dislike between you will grow and grow, for they will heap bad words on bad words when men bring the matter forward, for they are foolish men. It may also well be that it may be said that my sons are slow to take up a quarrel, but ye shall bear that for the sake of gaining time, for there are two sides to everything that is done, and ye can always pick a quarrel; but still ye shall let so much of your purpose out, as to say that if any wrong be put upon you that ye do mean something. But if ye had taken counsel from me at first, then these things should never have

been spoken about at all, and then ye would have gotten no disgrace from them; but now ye have the greatest risk of it, and so it will go on ever growing and growing with your disgrace, that ye will never get rid of it until ye bring yourselves into a strait, and have to fight your way out with weapons; but in that there is a long and weary night in which ye will have to grope your way."

After that they ceased speaking about it; but the matter became the daily talk of many men.

One day it happened that those brothers spoke to Kari and bade him go to Gritwater. Kari said he thought he might go elsewhither on a better journey, but still he would go if that were Njal's counsel. So after that Kari fares to meet Thrain, and then they talk over the matter, and they did not each look at it in the same way.

Kari comes home, and Njal's sons ask how things had gone between Thrain and him. Kari said he would rather not repeat the words that had passed, "but," he went on, "it is to be looked for that the like words will be spoken when ye yourselves can hear them."

Thrain had fifteen house-carles trained to arms in his house, and eight of them rode with him whithersoever he went. Thrain was very fond of show and dress, and

always rode in a blue cloak, and had on a gilded helm, and the spear—the Earl's gift—in his hand, and a fair shield, and a sword at his belt. Along with him always went Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Grani, Gunnar of Lithend's son. But nearest of all to him went Killing-Hrapp. Lodinn was the name of his serving-man, he too went with Thrain when he journeyed; Tjorvi was the name of Lodinn's brother, and he too was one of Thrain's band. The worst of all, in their words against Njal's sons, were Hrapp and Grani; and it was mostly their doing that no atonement was offered to them.

Njal's sons often spoke to Kari that he should ride with them; and it came to that at last, for he said it would be well that they heard Thrain's answer.

Then they busked them, four of Njal's sons, and Kari the fifth, and so they fare to Gritwater.

There was a wide porch in the homestead there, so that many men might stand in it side by side. There was a woman out of doors, and she saw their coming, and told Thrain of it; he bade them to go out into the porch, and take their arms, and they did so.

Thrain stood in mid-door, but Killing-Hrapp and Grani Gunnar's son stood on either hand of him; then next stood Gunnar Lambi's son, then Lodinn and Tjorvi,

then Lambi Sigurd's son; then each of the others took his place right and left; for the house-carles were all at home.

Skarphedinn and his men walk up from below, and he went first, then Kari, then Hauskuld, then Grim, then Helgi. But when they had come up to the door, then not a word of welcome passed the lips of those who stood before them.

"May we all be welcome here?" said Skarphedinn.

Hallgerda stood in the porch, and had been talking low to Hrapp, then she spoke out loud:—

"None of those who are here will say that ye are welcome."

Then Skarphedinn sang a song.

"Prop of sea-waves' fire,* thy fretting
Cannot cast a weight on us,
Warriors wight; yes, wolf and eagle
Willingly I feed to-day;
Carline thrust into the ingle,
Or a tramping whore, art thou;
Lord of skates that skim the sea-belt,†
Odin's mocking cup‡ I mix."

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* "Prop of sea-waves' fire," a periphrasis for woman that bears gold on her arm.

† "Skates that skim," etc., a periphrasis for ships.

‡ "Odin's mocking cup," mocking songs.

"Thy words," said Skarphedinn, "will not be worth much, for thou art either a hag, only fit to sit in the ingle, or a harlot."

"These words of thine thou shalt pay for," she says, "ere thou farest home."

"Thee am I come to see, Thrain," said Helgi, "and to know if thou wilt make me any amends for those wrongs and hardships which befell me for thy sake in Norway."

"I never knew," said Thrain, "that ye two brothers were wont to measure your manhood by money; or, how long shall such a claim for amends stand over?"

"Many will say," says Helgi, "that thou oughtest to offer us atonement, since thy life was at stake."

Then Hrapp said, "'Twas just luck that swayed the balance, when he got stripes who ought to bear them; and she dragged you under disgrace and hardships, but us away from them."

"Little good luck was there in that," says Helgi, "to break faith with the Earl, and to take to thee instead."

"Thinkest thou not that thou hast some amends to seek from me," says Hrapp. "I will atone thee in a way that, methinks, were fitting."

"The only dealings we shall have," says Helgi, "will be those which will not stand thee in good stead."

"Don't bandy words with Hrapp," said Skarphedinn, "but give him a red skin for a grey."*

"Hold thy tongue, Skarphedinn," said Hrapp, "or I will not spare to bring my axe on thy head."

"'Twill be proved soon enough, I dare say," says Skarphedinn, "which of us is to scatter gravel over the other's head."

"Away with you home, ye 'Dungbeardlings!'" says Hallgerda, "and so we will call you always from this day forth; but your father we will call 'the Beardless Carle.'"

They did not fare home before all who were there had made themselves guilty of uttering those words, save Thrain; he forbade men to utter them.

Then Njal's sons went away, and fared till they came home; then they told their father.

"Did ye call any men to witness of those words?" says Njal.

"We called none," says Skarphedinn; "we do not mean to follow that suit up except on the battlefield."

"No one will now think," says Bergthora, "that ye have the heart to lift your weapons."

* An allusion to the Beast Epic, where the cunning fox laughs at the flayed condition of his stupid foes, the wolf and bear. We should say, "Don't stop to speak with him, but rather beat him black and blue."

"Spare thy tongue, mistress!" says Kari, "in egging on thy sons, for they will be quite eager enough."

After that they all talk long in secret, Njal and his sons, and Kari Solmund's son, their brother-in-law.

CHAPTER XCI.

THRAIN SIGFUS' SON'S SLAYING.

Now there was great talk about this quarrel of theirs, and all seemed to know that it would not settle down peacefully.

Runolf, the son of Wolf Aurpriest, east in the Dale, was a great friend of Thrain's, and had asked Thrain to come and see him, and it was settled that he should come east when about three weeks or a month were wanting to winter.

Thrain bade Hrapp, and Grani, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Lodinn, and Tjorvi, eight of them in all, to go on this journey with him. Hallgerda and Thorgerda were to go too. At the same time Thrain gave it out that he meant to stay in the Mark with his brother Kettle, and said how many nights he meant to be away from home.

They all of them had full arms. So they rode east

across Markfleet, and found there some gangrel women, and they begged them to put them across the Fleet west on their horses, and they did so.

Then they rode into the Dale, and had a hearty welcome; there Kettle of the Mark met them, and there they sate two nights.

Both Runolf and Kettle besought Thrain that he would make up his quarrel with Njal's sons; but he said he would never pay any money, and answered crossly, for he said he thought himself quite a match for Njal's sons wherever they met.

"So it may be," says Runolf; "but so far as I can see, no man has been their match since Gunnar of Lithend died, and it is likelier that ye will both drag one another down to death."

Thrain said that was not to be dreaded.

Then Thrain fared up into the Mark, and was there two nights more; after that he rode down into the Dale, and was sent away from both houses with fitting gifts.

Now the Markfleet was then flowing between sheets of ice on both sides, and there were tongues of ice bridging it across every here and there.

Thrain said that he meant to ride home that evening, but Runolf said that he ought not to ride home;

he said, too, that it would be more wary not to fare back as he had said he would before he left home.

"That is fear, and I will none of it," answers Thrain.

Now those gangrel women whom they had put across the Fleet came to Bergthorsknoll, and Bergthora asked whence they came, but they answered, "Away east under Eyjafell."

"Then, who put you across Markfleet?" said Bergthora.

"Those," said they, "who were the most boastful and bravest clad of men."

"Who?" asked Bergthora.

"Thrain Sigfus' son," said they, "and his company, but we thought it best to tell thee that they were so full-tongued and foul-tongued towards this house, against thy husband and his sons."

"Listeners do not often hear good of themselves," says Bergthora. After that they went their way, and Bergthora gave them gifts on their going, and asked them when Thrain might be coming home.

They said that he would be from home four or five nights.

After that Bergthora told her sons and her son-in-law Kari, and they talked long and low about the matter.

But that same morning, when Thrain and his men rode from the east, Njal woke up early and heard how Skarphedinn's axe came against the panel.

Then Njal rises up, and goes out, and sees that his sons are all there with their weapons, and Kari, his son-in-law too. Skarphedinn was foremost. He was in a blue cape, and had a targe, and his axe aloft on his shoulder. Next to him went Helgi; he was in a red kirtle, had a helm on his head, and a red shield, on which a hart was marked. Next to him went Kari; he had on a silken jerkin, a gilded helm and shield, and on it was drawn a lion. They were all in bright holiday clothes.

Njal called out to Skarphedinn,

"Whither art thou going, kinsman?"

"On a sheep hunt," he said.

"So it was once before," said Njal, "but then ye hunted men."

Skarphedinn laughed at that, and said,—

"Hear ye what the old man says? He is not without his doubts."

"When was it that thou spokest thus before," asks Kari.

"When I slew Sigmund the white," says Skarphedinn, "Gunnar of Lithend's kinsman."

"For what?" asks Kari.

"He had slain Thord Freedmanson, my foster-father."

Njal went home, but they fared up into the Redslips, and bided there; thence they could see the others as soon as ever they rode from the east out of the Dale.

There was sunshine that day and bright weather.

Now Thrain and his men ride down out of the Dale along the river bank.

Lambi Sigurd's son said,—

"Shields gleam away yonder in the Redslips when the sun shines on them, and there must be some men lying in wait there."

"Then," says Thrain, "we will turn our way lower down the Fleet, and then they will come to meet us if they have any business with us."

So they turn down the Fleet. "Now they have caught sight of us," said Skarphedinn, "for lo! they turn their path elsewhither, and now we have no other choice than to run down and meet them."

"Many men," said Kari, "would rather not lie in wait if the balance of force were not more on their side than it is on ours; they are eight, but we are five."

Now they turn down along the Fleet, and see a tongue of ice bridging the stream lower down and mean to cross there.

Thrain and his men take their stand upon the ice away from the tongue, and Thrain said—

"What can these men want? They are five, and we are eight."

"I guess," said Lambi Sigurd's son, "that they would still run the risk though more men stood against them."

Thrain throws off his cloak, and takes off his helm.

Now it happened to Skarphedinn, as they ran down along the Fleet, that his shoe-string snapped asunder, and he stayed behind.

"Why so slow, Skarphedinn?" quoth Grim.

"I am tying my shoe," he says.

"Let us get on ahead," says Kari; "methinks he will not be slower than we."

So they turn off to the tongue, and run as fast as they can. Skarphedinn sprang up as soon as he was ready, and had lifted his axe, "the ogress of war," aloft, and runs right down to the Fleet. But the Fleet was so deep that there was no fording it for a long way up or down.

A great sheet of ice had been thrown up by the flood on the other side of the Fleet as smooth and slippery as glass, and there Thrain and his men stood in the midst of the sheet.

Skarphedinn takes a spring into the air, and leaps over the stream between the icebanks, and does not

check his course, but rushes still onwards with a slide. The sheet of ice was very slippery, and so he went as fast as a bird flies. Thrain was just about to put his helm on his head; and now Skarphedinn bore down on them, and hews at Thrain with his axe, "the ogress of war," and smote him on the head, and clove him down to the teeth, so that his jaw-teeth fell out on the ice. This feat was done with such a quick sleight that no one could get a blow at him; he glided away from them at once at full speed. Tjorvi, indeed, threw his shield before him on the ice, but he leapt over it, and still kept his feet, and slid quite to the end of the sheet of ice.

There Kari and his brothers came to meet him.

"This was done like a man," says Kari.

"Your share is still left," says Skarphedinn, and sang a song.

"To the strife of swords not slower,
After all, I came than you,
For with ready stroke the sturdy
Squanderer of wealth I felled;
But since Grim's and Helgi's sea-stag*
Norway's Earl erst took and stripped,
Now 'tis time for sea-fire bearers†
Such dishonour to avenge."

* "Sea-stag," periphrasis for ship.

† "Sea-fire bearers," the bearers of gold, men, that is, Helgi and Grim.

And this other song he sang—

"Swiftly down I dashed my weapon,
Gashing giant, byrnie-breacher,*
She, the noisy ogre's namesake,†
Soon with flesh the ravens glutted;
Now your words to Hrapp remember,
On broad ice now rouse the storm,
With dull crash war's eager ogress
Battle's earliest note hath sung."

"That befits us well, and we will do it well," say Helgi.

Then they turn up towards them. Both Grim and Helgi see where Hrapp is, and they turned on him at once. Hrapp hews at Grim there and then with his axe; Helgi sees this and cuts at Hrapp's arm, and cut it off, and down fell the axe.

"In this," says Hrapp, "thou hast done a most needful work, for this hand hath wrought harm and death to many a man."

"And so here an end shall be put to it," says Grim; and with that he ran him through with a spear, and then Hrapp fell down dead.

Tjorvi turns against Kari and hurls a spear at him. Kari leapt up in the air, and the spear flew below his feet. Then Kari rushes at him, and hews at him on the

* "Byrnie-breacher," piercer of coats of mail.

† "Noisy ogre's namesake," an allusion to the name of Skarphedinn's axe, "the ogress of war."

breast with his sword, and the blow passed at once into his chest, and he got his death there and then.

Then Skarphedinn seizes both Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and said—

"Here have I caught two whelps! but what shall we do with them?"

"It is in thy power," says Helgi, "to slay both or either of them, if you wish them dead."

"I cannot find it in my heart to do both—help Hogni and slay his brother," says Skarphedinn.

"Then the day will once come," says Helgi, "when thou wilt wish that thou hadst slain him, for never will he be true to thee, nor will any one of the others who are now here."

"I shall not fear them," answers Skarphedinn.

"After that they gave peace to Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Lodinn.

After that they went down to the Fleet where Skarphedinn had leapt over it, and Kari and the others measured the length of the leap with their spear-shafts, and it was twelve ells.*

* Twelve ells, about twenty-four feet (the Norse ell being something more than two feet), a good jump, but not beyond the power of man. Comp. Orkn. Saga, ch. 113, new ed., vol. i., 457, where Earl Harold leaps nine ells over a dike.

Then they turned homewards, and Njal asked what tidings. They told him all just as it had happened, and Njal said—

"These are great tidings, and it is more likely that hence will come the death of one of my sons, if not more evil."

Gunnar Lambi's son bore the body of Thrain with him to Gritwater, and he was laid in a cairn there.

CHAPTER XCII.

KETTLE TAKES HAUSKULD AS HIS FOSTER-SON.

KETTLE of the Mark had to wife Thorgerda Njal's daughter, but he was Thrain's brother, and he thought he was come into a strait, so he rode to Njal's house, and asked whether he were willing to atone in any way for Thrain's slaying?

"I will atone for it handsomely," answered Njal; "and my wish is that thou shouldst look after the matter with thy brothers who have to take the price of the atonement, that they may be ready to join in it."

Kettle said he would do so with all his heart, and Kettle rode home first; a little after, he summoned all his brothers to Lithend, and then he had a talk with

them; and Hogni was on his side all through the talk; and so it came about that men were chosen to utter the award; and a meeting was agreed on, and the fair price of a man was awarded for Thrain's slaying, and they all had a share in the blood-money who had a lawful right to it. After that pledges of peace and good faith were agreed to, and they were settled in the most sure and binding way.

Njal paid down all the money out of hand well and bravely; and so things were quiet for a while.

One day Njal rode up into the Mark, and he and Kettle talked together the whole day; Njal rode home at even, and no man knew of what they had taken counsel.

A little after Kettle fares to Gritwater, and he said to Thorgerda,—

"Long have I loved my brother Thrain much, and now I will shew it, for I will ask Hauskuld Thrain's son to be my foster-child."

"Thou shalt have thy choice of this," she says; "and thou shalt give this lad all the help in thy power when he is grown up, and avenge him if he is slain with weapons, and bestow money on him for his wife's dower; and besides, thou shalt swear to do all this."

Now Hauskuld fares home with Kettle, and is with him some time.

CHAPTER XCIII.

NJAL TAKES HAUSKULD TO FOSTER.

ONCE on a time Njal rides up into the Mark, and he had a hearty welcome. He was there that night, and in the evening Njal called out to the lad Hauskuld, and he went up to him at once.

Njal had a ring of gold on his hand, and shewed it to the lad. He took hold of the gold, and looked at it, and put it on his finger.

"Wilt thou take the gold as a gift?" said Njal.

"That I will," said the lad.

"Knowest thou," says Njal, "what brought thy father to his death?"

"I know," answers the lad, "that Skarphedinn slew him; but we need not keep that in mind, when an atonement has been made for it, and a full price paid for him."

"Better answered than asked," said Njal; "and thou wilt live to be a good man and true," he adds.

"Methinks thy forecasting," says Hauskuld, "is worth having, for I know that thou art foresighted and unlying."

"Now I will offer to foster thee," said Njal, "if thou wilt take the offer."

He said he would be willing to take both that honour and any other good offer which he might make. So the end of the matter was, that Hauskuld fared home with Njal as his foster-son.

He suffered no harm to come nigh the lad, and loved him much. Njal's sons took him about with them, and did him honour in every way. And so things go on till Hauskuld is full grown. He was both tall and strong; the fairest of men to look on, and well haired; blithe of speech, bountiful, well behaved; as well trained to arms as the best; fairspoken to all men, and much beloved.

Njal's sons and Hauskuld were never apart, either in word or deed.

CHAPTER XCIV.

OF FLOSI, THORD'S SON.

THERE was a man named Flosi, he was the son of Thord Freyspriest.* Flosi had to wife Steinvora, daughter of

* Thord was the son of Auzur, the son of Asbjorn Eyjangr the son of Bjorn, the son of Helgi, the son of Bjorn the roughfooted, the son of Grim, the Lord of Sogn. The mother of Flosi was Ingunna,

Hall of the Side. She was base born, and her mother's name was Solvora, daughter of Herjolf the white. Flosi dwelt at Swinefell, and was a mighty chief. He was tall of stature, and strong withal, the most forward and boldest of men. His brother's name was Starkad;* he was not by the same mother as Flosi.

The other brothers of Flosi were Thorgeir and Stein, Kolbein and Egil. Hildigunna was the name of the daughter of Starkad Flosi's brother. She was a proud, high-spirited maiden, and one of the fairest of women. She was so skilful with her hands, that few women were equally skilful. She was the grimmest and hardest-hearted of all women; but still a woman of open hand and heart when any fitting call was made upon her.

daughter of Thorir of Espihole, the son of Hamond Hellskin, the son of Hjor, the son of Half, who ruled over the men of Half, the son of Hjorleif, the lover of women. The mother of Thorir was Ingunna, daughter of Helgi the lean, who took the land round Eyjafirth, as the first settler.

* The mother of Starkad was Thraslauga daughter of Thorstein titling the son of Gerleif; but the mother of Thraslauga was Aud; she was a daughter of Eyvind Karf, one of the first settlers, and sister of Modolf the wise.

CHAPTER XCV.

OF HALL OF THE SIDE.

HALL was the name of a man who was called Hall of the Side. He was the son of Thorstein Baudvar's son.* Hall had to wife Joreida, daughter of Thidrandi† the wise. Thorstein was the name of Hall's brother, and he was nick-named broad-paunch. His son was Kol, whom Kari slays in Wales. The sons of Hall of the Side were Thorstein and Egil, Thorwald and Ljot, and Thidrandi, whom, it is said, the goddesses slew.

There was a man named Thorir, whose surname was Holt-Thorir; his sons were these:—Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorleif crow, from whom the Wood-dwellers are come, and Thorgrim the big.

* Hall's mother's name was Thordisa, and she was a daughter of Auzur, the son of Hrodlaug, the son of Earl Rognvald of Mæren, the son of Eystein the noisy.

† Thidrandi was the son of Kettle rumble, the son of Thorir, the son of Thidrandi of Verudale. The brothers of Thidrandi were Kettle rumble, in Njordwick, and Thorwald, the father of Helgi Droplaug's son. Hallkatla was the sister of Joreida. She was the mother of Thorkel Geiti's son, and Thidrandi.

CHAPTER XCVI.

OF THE CHANGE OF FAITH.

THERE had been a change of rulers in Norway, Earl Hacon was dead and gone, but in his stead was come Olaf Tryggvi's son. That was the end of Earl Hacon, that Kark, the thrall, cut his throat at Rimul in Gaulardale.

Along with that was heard that there had been a change of faith in Norway; they had cast off the old faith, but King Olaf had christened the western lands, Shetland, and the Orkneys, and the Faroe Isles.

Then many men spoke so that Njal heard it, that it was a strange and wicked thing to throw off the old faith.

Then Njal spoke and said—

"It seems to me as though this new faith must be much better, and he will be happy who follows this rather than the other; and if those men come out hither who preach this faith, then I will back them well."

He went often alone away from other men and muttered to himself.

That same harvest a ship came out into the firths east to Berufirth, at a spot called Gautawick. The captain's name was Thangbrand. He was a son of Willibald, a count of Saxony. Thangbrand was sent out hither by King Olaf Tryggvi's son, to preach the faith. Along with him came that man of Iceland whose name was Gudleif.* Gudleif was a great manslayer, and one of the strongest of men, and hardy and forward in everything.

Two brothers dwelt at Beruness; the name of the one was Thorleif, but the other was Kettle. They were sons of Holmstein, the son of Auzur of Broaddale. These brothers held a meeting, and forbade men to have any dealings with them. This Hall of the Side heard. He dwelt at Thvattwater in Alftafirth; he rode to the ship with twenty-nine men, and he fares at once to find Thangbrand, and spoke to him and asked him—

"Trade is rather dull, is it not?"

He answered that so it was.

"Now will I say my errand," says Hall; "it is, that I wish to ask you all to my house, and run the risk of my being able to get rid of your wares for you."

* He was the son of Ari, the son of Mar, the son of Atli, the son of Wolf squinteye the son of Hogni the white, the son of Otryg, the son of Oblaud, the son of Hjorleif the lover of women, King of Hordaland.

Thangbrand thanked him, and fared to Thvattwater that harvest.

It so happened one morning that Thangbrand was out early and made them pitch a tent on land, and sang mass in it, and took much pains with it, for it was a great high day.

Hall spoke to Thangbrand and asked, "In memory of whom keepest thou this day?"

"In memory of Michael the archangel," says Thangbrand.

"What follows that angel?" asks Hall.

"Much good," says Thangbrand. "He will weigh all the good that thou doest, and he is so merciful, that whenever any one pleases him, he makes his good deeds weigh more."

"I would like to have him for my friend," says Hall.

"That thou mayest well have," says Thangbrand, "only give thyself over to him by God's help this very day."

"I only make this condition," says Hall, "that thou givest thy word for him that he will then become my guardian angel."

"That I will promise," says Thangbrand.

Then Hall was baptized, and all his household.

CHAPTER XCVII.

OF THANGBRAND'S JOURNEYS.

THE spring after Thangbrand set out to preach Christianity, and Hall went with him. But when they came west across Lonsheath to Staffell, there they found a man dwelling named Thorkell. He spoke most against the faith, and challenged Thangbrand to single combat. Then Thangbrand bore a rood-cross* before his shield, and the end of their combat was that Thangbrand won the day and slew Thorkell.

Thence they fared to Hornfirth and turned in as guests at Borgarhaven, west of Heinabergs sand. There Hilldir the old dwelt,† and then Hilldir and all his household took upon them the new faith.

Thence they fared to Fellcombe, and went in as guests to Calffell. There dwelt Kol Thorstein's son, Hall's kinsman, and he took upon him the faith and all his house.

Thence they fared to Swinefell, and Flosi only took the sign of the cross, but gave his word to back them at the Thing.

* Rood-cross, a crucifix.

† His son was Glum who fared to the burning with Flosi.

Thence they fared west to Woodcombe, and went in as guests at Kirkby. There dwelt Surt Asbjorn's son, the son of Thorstein, the son of Kettle the foolish. These had all of them been Christians from father to son.

After that they fared out of Woodcombe on to Headbrink. By that time the story of their journey was spread far and wide. There was a man named Sorcerer-Hedinn who dwelt in Carlinedale. There heathen men made a bargain with him that he should put Thangbrand to death with all his company. He fared upon Arnstacks-heath, and there made a great sacrifice when Thangbrand was riding from the east. Then the earth burst asunder under his horse, but he sprang off his horse and saved himself on the brink of the gulf, but the earth swallowed up the horse and all his harness, and they never saw him more.

Then Thangbrand praised God.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

OF THANGBRAND AND GUDLEIF.

GUDLEIF now searches for Sorcerer-Hedinn and finds him on the heath, and chases him down into Carlinedale, and

got within spearshot of him, and shoots a spear at him and through him.

Thence they fared to Dyrholms and held a meeting there, and preached the faith there, and there Ingialld, the son of Thorsteinn Highbankawk, became a Christian.

Thence they fared to the Fleetlithe and preached the faith there. There Weatherlid the Skald, and Ari his son, spoke most against the faith, and for that they slew Weatherlid, and then this song was sung about it :—

> " He who proved his blade on bucklers,
> South went through the land to whet
> Brand that oft hath felled his foeman,
> 'Gainst the forge which foams with song;*
> Mighty wielder of war's sickle
> Made his sword's avenging edge
> Hard on hero's helm-prop rattle,†
> Skull of Weatherlid the Skald."

Thence Thangbrand fared to Bergthorsknoll, and Njal took the faith and all his house, but Mord and Valgard went much against it, and thence they fared out across the rivers; so they went on into Hawkdale and

* " Forge which foams with song," the poet's head, in which songs are forged, and gush forth like foaming mead.

† " Hero's helm-prop," the hero's, man's, head which supports his helm.

there they baptized Hall,* and he was then three winters old.

Thence Thangbrand fared to Grimsness, there Thorwald the scurvy gathered a band against him, and sent word to Wolf Uggi's son, that he must fare against Thangbrand and slay him, and made this song on him,—

"To the wolf in Woden's harness,
Uggi's worthy warlike son,
I, steel's swinger dearly loving,
This my simple bidding send;
That the wolf of Gods† he chaseth,—
Man who snaps at chink of gold—
Wolf who base our Gods blasphemeth,
I the other wolf‡ will crush."

Wolf sang another song in return,—

"Swarthy skarf from mouth that skimmeth
Of the man who speaks in song
Never will I catch, though surely
Wealthy warrior it hath sent;
Tender of the sea-horse snorting,
E'en though ill deeds are on foot,

* It is needless to say that this Hall was not Hall of the Side.

† "Wolf of Gods," the "*caput lupinum*," the outlaw of heaven, the outcast from Valhalla, Thangbrand.

‡ "The other wolf," Gudleif.

Still to risk mine eyes are open;
Harmful 'tis to snap at flies."*

"And," says he, "I don't mean to be made a catspaw by him, but let him take heed lest his tongue twists a noose for his own neck."

And after that the messenger fared back to Thorwald the scurvy and told him Wolf's words. Thorwald had many men about him, and gave it out that he would lie in wait for them on Bluewood-heath.

Now those two, Thangbrand and Gudleif, ride out of Hawkdale, and there they came upon a man who rode to meet them. That man asked for Gudleif, and when he found him he said,—

"Thou shalt gain by being the brother of Thorgil of Reykiahole, for I will let thee know that they have set many ambushes, and this too, that Thorwald the scurvy is now with his band at Hestbeck on Grimsness."

"We shall not the less for all that ride to meet him," says Gudleif, and then they turned down to Hestbeck. Thorwald was then come across the brook, and Gudleif said to Thangbrand,—

"Here is now Thorwald; let us rush on him now."

* "Swarthy skarf," the skarf, or *pelecanus carbo*, the cormorant. He compares the message of Thorwald to the cormorant skimming over the waves, and says he will never take it. "Snap at flies," a very common Icelandic metaphor from fish rising to a fly.

Thangbrand shot a spear through Thorwald, but Gudleif smote him on the shoulder and hewed his arm off, and that was his death.

After that they ride up to the Thing, and it was a near thing that the kinsmen of Thorwald had fallen on Thangbrand, but Njal and the eastfirthers stood by Thangbrand.

Then Hjallti Skeggi's son sang this rhyme at the Hill of Laws—

"Ever will I Gods blaspheme
Freyja methinks a dog does seem,
Freyja a dog? Aye! let them be
Both dogs together Odin and she."*

Hjallti fared abroad that summer and Gizur the white with him, but Thangbrand's ship was wrecked away east at Bulandsness, and the ship's name was "Bison."

Thangbrand and his messmate fared right through the west country, and Steinvora, the mother of Ref the Skald, came against him; she preached the heathen faith to Thangbrand and made him a long speech. Thangbrand held his peace while she spoke, but made a long speech after her, and turned all that she had said the wrong way against her.

* Maurer thinks the allusion is here to some mythological legend on Odin's adventures which has not come down to us.

"Hast thou heard," she said, "how Thor challenged Christ to single combat, and how he did not dare to fight with Thor?"

"I have heard tell," says Thangbrand, "that Thor was naught but dust and ashes, if God had not willed that he should live."

"Knowest thou," she says, "who it was that shattered thy ship?"

"What hast thou to say about that?" he asks.

"That I will tell thee," she says.

"He that giant's offspring* slayeth
Broke the mew-field's bison stout,†
Thus the Gods, bell's warder‡ grieving,
Crushed the falcon of the strand;§
To the courser of the causeway‖
Little good was Christ I ween,
When Thor shattered ships to pieces
Gylfi's hart¶ no God could help."

And again she sang another song—

"Thangbrand's vessel from her moorings,
Sea-king's steed, Thor wrathful tore,

---

* "He that giant's," etc., Thor.

† "Mew-field's bison," the sea-going ship, which sails over the plain of the sea-mew.

‡ "Bell's warder," the Christian priest whose bell-ringing formed part of the rites of the new faith.

§ "Falcon of the strand," ship.

‖ "Courser of the causeway," ship. ¶ "Gylfi's hart," ship.

Shook and shattered all her timbers,
Hurled her broadside on the beach;
Ne'er again shall Viking's snow-shoe,*
On the briny billows glide,
For a storm by Thor awakened,
Dashed the bark to splinters small."

After that Thangbrand and Steinvora parted, and they fared west to Bardastrand.

CHAPTER XCIX.

OF GEST ODDLEIF'S SON.

GEST ODDLEIF'S son dwelt at Hagi on Bardastrand. He was one of the wisest of men, so that he foresaw the fates and fortunes of men. He made a feast for Thangbrand and his men. They fared to Hagi with sixty men. Then it was said that there were two hundred heathen men to meet them, and that a Baresark was looked for to come thither, whose name was Otrygg, and all were afraid of him. Of him such great things as these were said, that he feared neither fire nor sword, and the heathen men were sore afraid at his coming. Then Thangbrand asked if men were willing to take the faith, but all the heathen men spoke against it.

* "Viking's snow-shoe," sea-king's ship.

"Well," says Thangbrand, "I will give you the means whereby ye shall prove whether my faith is better. We will hallow two fires. The heathen men shall hallow one and I the other, but a third shall be unhallowed; and if the Baresark is afraid of the one that I hallow, but treads both the others, then ye shall take the faith."

"That is well spoken," says Gest, "and I will agree to this for myself and my household."

And when Gest had so spoken, then many more agreed to it.

Then it was said that the Baresark was coming up to the homestead, and then the fires were made and burnt strong. Then men took their arms and sprang up on the benches, and so waited.

The Baresark rushed in with his weapons. He comes into the room, and treads at once the fire which the heathen men had hallowed, and so comes to the fire that Thangbrand had hallowed, and dares not to tread it, but said that he was on fire all over. He hews with his sword at the bench, but strikes a crossbeam as he brandished the weapon aloft. Thangbrand smote the arm of the Baresark with his crucifix, and so mighty a token followed that the sword fell from the Baresark's hand.

Then Thangbrand thrusts a sword into his breast,

and Gudleif smote him on the arm and hewed it off. Then many went up and slew the Baresark.

After that Thangbrand asked if they would take the faith now ?

Gest said he had only spoken what he meant to keep to.

Then Thangbrand baptized Gest and all his house and many others. Then Thangbrand took counsel with Gest whether he should go any further west among the firths, but Gest set his face against that, and said they were a hard race of men there, and ill to deal with, "but if it be foredoomed that this faith shall make its way, then it will be taken as law at the Althing, and then all the chiefs out of the districts will be there."

"I did all that I could at the Thing," says Thangbrand, "and it was very uphill work."

"Still thou hast done most of the work," says Gest, "though it may be fated that others shall make Christianity law ; but it is here as the saying runs, 'No tree falls at the first stroke.'"

After that Gest gave Thangbrand good gifts, and he fared back south. Thangbrand fared to the Southlander's Quarter, and so to the Eastfirths. He turned in as a guest at Bergthorsknoll, and Njal gave him good gifts. Thence he rode east to Alftafirth to meet Hall of the

Side. He caused his ship to be mended, and heathen men called it "Iron-basket." On board that ship Thangbrand fared abroad, and Gudleif with him.

CHAPTER C.

OF GIZUR THE WHITE AND HJALLTI.

THAT same summer Hjallti Skeggi's son was outlawed at the Thing for blasphemy against the Gods.

Thangbrand told King Olaf of all the mischief that the Icelanders had done to him, and said that they were such sorcerers there that the earth burst asunder under his horse and swallowed up the horse.

Then King Olaf was so wroth that he made them seize all the men from Iceland and set them in dungeons, and meant to slay them.

Then they, Gizur the white and Hjallti, came up and offered to lay themselves in pledge for those men, and fare out to Iceland and preach the faith. The king took this well, and they got them all set free again.

Then Gizur and Hjallti busked their ship for Iceland, and were soon "boun." They made the land at Eyrar when ten weeks of summer had passed; they got them horses at once, but left other men to strip their ship.

Then they ride with thirty men to the Thing, and sent word to the Christian men that they must be ready to stand by them.

Hjallti stayed behind at Reydarmull, for he had heard that he had been made an outlaw for blasphemy, but when they came to the "Boiling Kettle"* down below the brink of the Rift,† there came Hjallti after them, and said he would not let the heathen men see that he was afraid of them.

Then many Christian men rode to meet them, and they ride in battle array to the Thing. The heathen men had drawn up their men in array to meet them, and it was a near thing that the whole body of the Thing had come to blows, but still it did not go so far.

CHAPTER CI.

OF THORGEIR OF LIGHTWATER.

THERE was a man named Thorgeir who dwelt at Lightwater; he was the son of Tjorfi, the son of Thorkel the long, the son of Kettle Longneck. His mother's name was Thoruna, and she was the daughter of Thorstein,

* "Boiling kettle." This was a hver, or hot spring.

† This was the "Raven's Rift," opposite to the "Great Rift" on the other side of the Thingfield.

the son of Sigmund, the son of Bard of the Nip. Gudrida was the name of his wife; she was a daughter of Thorkel the black of Hleidrargarth. His brother was Worm wallet-back, the father of Hlenni the old of Saurby.*

The Christian men set up their booths, and Gizur the white and Hjallti were in the booths of the men from Mossfell. The day after both sides went to the Hill of Laws, and each, the Christian men as well as the heathen, took witness, and declared themselves out of the other's laws, and then there was such an uproar on the Hill of Laws that no man could hear the other's voice.

After that men went away, and all thought things looked like the greatest entanglement. The Christian men chose as their Speaker Hall of the Side, but Hall went to Thorgeir, the priest of Lightwater, who was the old Speaker of the law, and gave him three marks of silver† to utter what the law should be, but still that was most hazardous counsel, since he was an heathen.

Thorgeir lay all that day on the ground, and spread a cloak over his head, so that no man spoke with him; but the day after men went to the Hill of Laws, and

* Kettle and Thorkel were both sons of Thorir tag, the son of Kettle the seal, the son of Ornolf, the son of Bjornolf, the son of Grim hairy-cheek, the son of Kettle Hæing, the son of Hallbjorn halftroll of Ravensfood.

† This was no bribe, but his lawful fee.

then Thorgeir bade them be silent and listen, and spoke thus,—

"It seems to me as though our matters were come to a dead lock, if we are not all to have one and the same law; for if there be a sundering of the laws, then there will be a sundering of the peace, and we shall never be able to live in the land. Now, I will ask both Christian men and heathen whether they will hold to those laws which I utter?"

They all said they would.

He said he wished to take an oath of them, and pledges that they would hold to them, and they all said "yea" to that, and so he took pledges from them.

"This is the beginning of our laws," he said, "that all men shall be Christian here in the land, and believe in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but leave off all idol-worship, not expose children to perish, and not eat horseflesh. It shall be outlawry if such things are proved openly against any man; but if these things are done by stealth, then it shall be blameless."

But all this heathendom was all done away with within a few years' space, so that those things were not allowed to be done either by stealth or openly.

Thorgeir then uttered the law as to keeping the

Lord's day and fast days, Yuletide and Easter, and all the greatest highdays and holidays.

The heathen men thought they had been greatly cheated; but still the true faith was brought into the law, and so all men became Christian here in the land.

After that men fare home from the Thing.

CHAPTER CII.

THE WEDDING OF HAUSKULD, THE PRIEST OF WHITENESS.

Now we must take up the story, and say that Njal spoke thus to Hauskuld, his foster-son, and said—

"I would seek thee a match."

Hauskuld bade him settle the matter as he pleased, and asked whether he was most likely to turn his eyes.

"There is a woman called Hildigunna," answers Njal, "and she is the daughter of Starkad, the son of Thord Freyspriest. She is the best match I know of."

"See thou to it, foster-father," said Hauskuld; "that shall be my choice which thou choosest."

"Then we will look thitherward," says Njal.

A little while after, Njal called on men to go along with him. Then the sons of Sigfus, and Njal's sons,

and Kari Solmund's son, all of them fared with him and they rode east to Swinefell.

There they got a hearty welcome.

The day after, Njal and Flosi went to talk alone, and the speech of Njal ended thus, that he said,—

"This is my errand here, that we have set out on a wooing-journey, to ask for thy kinswoman Hildigunna."

"At whose hand?" says Flosi.

"At the hand of Hauskuld my foster-son," says Njal.

"Such things are well meant," says Flosi, "but still ye run each of you great risk, the one from the other; but what hast thou to say of Hauskuld?"

"Good I am able to say of him," says Njal; "and besides, I will lay down as much money as will seem fitting to thy niece and thyself, if thou wilt think of making this match."

"We will call her hither," says Flosi, "and know how she looks on the man."

Then Hildigunna was called, and she came thither.

Flosi told her of the wooing, but she said she was a proud-hearted woman.

"And I know not how things will turn out between me and men of like spirit; but this, too, is not the least of my dislike, that this man has no priesthood or leadership over men, but thou hast always said that thou

wouldest not wed me to a man who had not the priesthood."

"This is quite enough," says Flosi, "if thou wilt not be wedded to Hauskuld, to make me take no more pains about the match."

"Nay!" she says, "I do not say that I will not be wedded to Hauskuld if they can get him a priesthood or a leadership over men; but otherwise I will have nothing to say to the match."

"Then," said Njal, "I will beg thee to let this match stand over for three winters, that I may see what I can do."

Flosi said that so it should be.

"I will only bargain for this one thing," says Hildigunna, "if this match comes to pass, that we shall stay here away east."

Njal said he would rather leave that to Hauskuld, but Hauskuld said that he put faith in many men, but in none so much as his foster-father.

Now they ride from the east.

Njal sought to get a priesthood and leadership for Hauskuld, but no one was willing to sell his priesthood, and now the summer passes away till the Althing.

There were great quarrels at the Thing that summer,

and many a man then did as was their wont, in faring to see Njal; but he gave such counsel in men's lawsuits as was not thought at all likely, so that both the pleadings and the defence came to naught, and out of that great strife arose, when the lawsuits could not be brought to an end, and men rode home from the Thing unatoned.

Now things go on till another Thing comes. Njal rode to the Thing, and at first all is quiet until Njal says that it is high time for men to give notice of their suits.

Then many said that they thought that came to little, when no man could get his suit settled, even though the witnesses were summoned to the Althing, "and so," say they, "we would rather seek our rights with point and edge."

"So it must not be," says Njal, "for it will never do to have no law in the land. But yet ye have much to say on your side in this matter, and it behoves us who know the law, and who are bound to guide the law, to set men at one again, and to ensue peace. 'Twere good counsel, then, methinks, that we call together all the chiefs and talk the matter over."

Then they go to the Court of Laws, and Njal spoke and said,—

"Thee, Skapti Thorod's son and you other chiefs, I

call on, and say, that methinks our lawsuits have come into a deadlock, if we have to follow up our suits in the Quarter Courts, and they get so entangled that they can neither be pleaded nor ended. Methinks, it were wiser if we had a Fifth Court, and there pleaded those suits which cannot be brought to an end in the Quarter Courts."

"How," said Skapti, "wilt thou name a Fifth Court, when the Quarter Court is named for the old priesthoods, three twelves in each quarter?"

"I can see help for that," says Njal, "by setting up new priesthoods, and filling them with the men who are best fitted in each Quarter, and then let those men who are willing to agree to it, declare themselves ready to join the new priest's Thing."

"Well," says Skapti, "we will take this choice; but what weighty suits shall come before the court?"

"These matters shall come before it," says Njal,—"all matters of contempt of the Thing, such as if men bear false witness, or utter a false finding; hither, too, shall come all those suits in which the Judges are divided in opinion in the Quarter Court; then they shall be summoned to the Fifth Court; so, too, if men offer bribes, or take them, for their help in suits. In this court all the oaths shall be of the strongest kind, and two men

shall follow every oath, who shall support on their words of honour what the others swear. So it shall be also, if the pleadings on one side are right in form, and the other wrong, that the judgment shall be given for those that are right in form. Every suit in this court shall be pleaded just as is now done in the Quarter Court, save and except that when four twelves are named in the Fifth Court, then the plaintiff shall name and set aside six men out of the court, and the defendant other six; but if he will not set them aside, then the plaintiff shall name them and set them aside as he has done with his own six; but if the plaintiff does not set them aside, then the suit comes to naught, for three twelves shall utter judgment on all suits. We shall also have this arrangement in the Court of Laws, that those only shall have the right to make or change laws who sit on the middle bench, and to this bench those only shall be chosen who are wisest and best. There, too, shall the Fifth Court sit; but if those who sit in the Court of Laws are not agreed as to what they shall allow or bring in as law, then they shall clear the court for a division, and the majority shall bind the rest; but if any man who has a seat in the Court be outside the Court of Laws and cannot get inside it, or thinks himself overborne in the suit, then he shall forbid them by a protest, so that they can hear it in the

Court, and then he has made all their grants and all their decisions void and of none effect, and stopped them by his protest."

After that, Skapti Thorod's son brought the Fifth Court into the law, and all that was spoken of before. Then men went to the Hill of Laws, and men set up new priesthoods: In the Northlanders' Quarter were these new priesthoods. The priesthood of the Melmen in Midfirth, and the Laufesingers' priesthood in the Eyjafirth.

Then Njal begged for a hearing, and spoke thus:—

"It is known to many men what passed between my sons and the men of Gritwater when they slew Thrain Sigfus' son. But for all that we settled the matter; and now I have taken Hauskuld into my house, and planned a marriage for him if he can get a priesthood anywhere; but no man will sell his priesthood, and so I will beg you to give me leave to set up a new priesthood at Whiteness for Hauskuld."

He got this leave from all, and after that he set up the new priesthood for Hauskuld; and he was afterwards called Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness.

After that, men ride home from the Thing, and Njal stayed but a short time at home ere he rides east to Swinefell, and his sons with him, and again stirs in the

matter of the marriage with Flosi; but Flosi said he was ready to keep faith with them in everything.

Then Hildigunna was betrothed to Hauskuld, and the day for the wedding feast was fixed, and so the matter ended. They then ride home, but they rode again shortly to the bridal, and Flosi paid down all her goods and money after the wedding, and all went off well.

They fared home to Bergthorsknoll, and were there the next year, and all went well between Hildigunna and Bergthora. But the next spring Njal bought land in Ossaby, and hands it over to Hauskuld, and thither he fares to his own abode. Njal got him all his household, and there was such love between them all, that none of them thought anything that he said or did any worth unless the others had a share in it.

Hauskuld dwelt long at Ossaby, and each backed the other's honour, and Njal's sons were always in Hauskuld's company. Their friendship was so warm, that each house bade the other to a feast every harvest, and gave each other great gifts; and so it goes on for a long while.

CHAPTER CIII.

THE SLAYING OF HAUSKULD NJAL'S SON.

THERE was a man named Lyting; he dwelt at Samstede, and he had to wife a woman named Steinvora; she was a daughter of Sigfus, and Thrain's sister. Lyting was tall of growth and a strong man, wealthy in goods and ill to deal with.

It happened once that Lyting had a feast in his house at Samstede, and he had bidden thither Hauskuld and the sons of Sigfus, and they all came. There, too, was Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son.

Hauskuld Njal's son and his mother had a farm at Holt, and he was always riding to his farm from Bergthorsknoll, and his path lay by the homestead at Samstede. Hauskuld had a son called Amund; he had been born blind, but for all that he was tall and strong. Lyting had two brothers—the one's name was Hallstein, and the other's Hallgrim. They were the most unruly of men, and they were ever with their brother, for other men could not bear their temper.

Lyting was out of doors most of that day, but every

now and then he went inside his house. At last he had gone to his seat, when in came a woman who had been out of doors, and she said—

"You were too far off to see outside how that proud fellow rode by the farm-yard!"

"What proud fellow was that," says Lyting, "of whom thou speakest?"

"Hauskuld Njal's son rode here by the yard," she says.

"He rides often here by the farm-yard," said Lyting, "and I can't say that it does not try my temper; and now I will make thee an offer, Hauskuld, to go along with thee if thou wilt avenge thy father and slay Hauskuld Njal's son."

"That I will not do," says Hauskuld, "for then I should repay Njal, my foster father, evil for good, and mayst thou and thy feasts never thrive henceforth."

With that he sprang up away from the board, and made them catch his horses, and rode home.

Then Lyting said to Grani Gunnar's son—

"Thou wert by when Thrain was slain, and that will still be in thy mind; and thou, too, Gunnar Lambi's son, and thou, Lambi Sigurd's son. Now, my will is that we ride to meet him this evening, and slay him."

"No," says Grani, "I will not fall on Njal's son,

and so break the atonement which good men and true have made."

With like words spoke each man of them, and so, too, spoke all the sons of Sigfus; and they took that counsel to ride away.

Then Lyting said, when they had gone away—

"All men know that I have taken no atonement for my brother-in-law Thrain, and I shall never be content that no vengeance—man for man—shall be taken for him."

After that he called on his two brothers to go with him, and three house-carles as well. They went on the way to meet Hauskuld as he came back, and lay in wait for him north of the farm-yard in a pit; and there they bided till it was about mideven.* Then Hauskuld rode up to them. They jump up all of them with their arms, and fall on him. Hauskuld guarded himself well, so that for a long while they could not get the better of him; but the end of it was at last that he wounded Lyting on the arm, and slew two of his serving-men, and then fell himself. They gave Hauskuld sixteen wounds, but they hewed not off the head from his body. They fared away into the wood east of Rang-river, and hid themselves there.

* Mideven, six o'clock P.M.

That same evening, Rodny's shepherd found Hauskuld dead, and went home and told Rodny of her son's slaying.

"Was he surely dead?" she asks; "was his head off?"

"It was not," he says.

"I shall know if I see," she says; "so take thou my horse and driving gear."

He did so, and got all things ready, and then they went thither where Hauskuld lay.

She looked at the wounds, and said—

"'Tis even as I thought, that he could not be quite dead, and Njal no doubt can cure greater wounds."

After that they took the body and laid it on the sledge and drove to Bergthorsknoll, and drew it into the sheepcote, and made him sit upright against the wall.

Then they went both of them and knocked at the door, and a house-carle went to the door She steals in by him at once, and goes till she comes to Njal's bed.

She asked whether Njal were awake? He said he had slept up to that time, but was then awake.

"But why art thou come hither so early?"

"Rise thou up," said Rodny, "from thy bed by my rival's side, and come out, and she too, and thy sons, to see thy son Hauskuld."

They rose and went out.

"Let us take our weapons," said Skarphedinn, "and have them with us."

Njal said naught at that, and they ran in and came out again armed.

She goes first till they come to the sheepcote; she goes in and bade them follow her. Then she lit a torch, and held it up and said,—

"Here, Njal, is thy son Hauskuld, and he hath gotten many wounds upon him, and now he will need leech-craft."

"I see death marks on him," said Njal, "but no signs of life; but why hast thou not closed his eyes and nostrils? see, his nostrils are still open!"

"That duty I meant for Skarphedinn," she says.

Then Skarphedinn went to close his eyes and nostrils, and said to his father—

"Who, sayest thou, hath slain him?"

"Lyting of Samstede and his brothers must have slain him," says Njal.

Then Rodny said, "into thy hands, Skarphedinn, I leave it to take vengeance for thy brother, and I ween that thou wilt take it well, though he be not lawfully begotten, and that thou wilt not be slow to take it."

"Wonderfully do ye men behave," said Bergthora, "when ye slay men for small cause, but talk and tarry over such wrongs as this until no vengeance at all is taken; and now tidings of this will soon come to Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness, and he will be offering you atonement, and you will grant him that, but now is the time to set about it, if ye seek for vengeance."

"Our mother eggs us on now with a just goading," said Skarphedinn, and sang a song.

"Well we know the warrior's temper,*
One and all, well, father thine,
But atonement to the mother,
Snake-land's stem† and thee were base;
He that hoardeth ocean's fire‡
Hearing this will leave his home;
Wound of weapon us hath smitten,
Worse the lot of those that wait!"

After that they all ran out of the sheepcote, but Rodny went indoors with Njal, and was there the rest of the night.

* "Warrior's temper," the temper of Hauskuld of Whiteness.

† "Snake-land's stem," a periphrasis for woman, Rodny.

‡ "He that hoardeth ocean's fire," a periphrasis for man, Hauskuld of Whiteness.

CHAPTER CIV.

THE SLAYING OF LYTING'S BROTHERS.

Now we must speak of Skarphedinn and his brothers, how they bend their course up to Rangriver. Then Skarphedinn said,—

"Stand we here and listen, and let us go stilly, for I hear the voices of men up along the river's bank. But will ye, Helgi and Grim, deal with Lyting single-handed, or with both his brothers?"

They said they would sooner deal with Lyting alone.

"Still," says Skarphedinn, "there is more game in him, and methinks it were ill if he gets away, but I trust myself best for not letting him escape."

"We will take such steps," says Helgi, "if we get a chance at him, that he shall not slip through our fingers."

Then they went thitherward, where they heard the voices of men, and see where Lyting and his brothers are by a stream.

Skarphedinn leaps over the stream at once, and alights on the sandy brink on the other side. There upon it stands Hallgrim and his brother. Skarphedinn smites at Hallgrim's thigh, so that he cut the leg clean

off, but he grasps Hallstein with his left hand. Lyting thrust at Skarphedinn, but Helgi came up then and threw his shield before the spear, and caught the blow on it. Lyting took up a stone and hurled it at Skarphedinn, and he lost his hold on Hallstein. Hallstein sprang up the sandy bank, but could get up it in no other way than by crawling on his hands and knees. Skarphedinn made a side blow at him with his axe, "the ogress of war," and hews asunder his backbone. Now Lyting turns and flies, but Helgi and Grim both went after him, and each gave him a wound, but still Lyting got across the river away from them, and so to the horses, and gallops till he comes to Ossaby.

Hauskuld was at home, and meets him at once. Lyting told him of these deeds.

"Such things were to be looked for by thee," says Hauskuld. "Thou hast behaved like a madman, and here the truth of the old saw will be proved; 'but a short while is hand fain of blow.' Methinks what thou hast got to look to now is whether thou wilt be able to save thy life or not."

"Sure enough," says Lyting, "I had hard work to get away, but still I wish now that thou wouldest get me atoned with Njal and his sons, so that I might keep my farm."

"So it shall be," says Hauskuld.

After that Hauskuld made them saddle his horse, and rode to Bergthorsknoll with five men. Njal's sons were then come home and had laid them down to sleep.

Hauskuld went at once to see Njal, and they began to talk.

"Hither am I come," said Hauskuld to Njal, "to beg a boon on behalf of Lyting, my uncle. He has done great wickedness against you and yours, broken his atonement and slain thy son."

"Lyting will perhaps think," said Njal, "that he has already paid a heavy fine in the loss of his brothers, but if I grant him any terms, I shall let him reap the good of my love for thee, and I will tell thee before I utter the award of atonement, that Lyting's brothers shall fall as outlaws. Nor shall Lyting have any atonement for his wounds, but on the other hand, he shall pay the full blood-fine for Hauskuld."

"My wish," said Hauskuld, "is, that thou shouldest make thine own terms."

"Well," says Njal, "then I will utter the award at once if thou wilt."

"Wilt thou," says Hauskuld, "that thy sons should be by."

"Then we should be no nearer an atonement than we were before," says Njal, "but they will keep to the atonement which I utter."

Then Hauskuld said, "Let us close the matter then, and handsel him peace on behalf of thy sons."

"So it shall be," says Njal. "My will then is that he pays two hundred in silver for the slaying of Hauskuld, but he may still dwell at Samstede; and yet I think it were wiser if he sold his land and changed his abode; but not for this quarrel; neither I nor my sons will break our pledges of peace to him: but methinks it may be that some one may rise up in this country against whom he may have to be on his guard. Yet, lest it should seem that I make a man an outcast from his native place, I allow him to be here in this neighbourhood, but in that case he alone is answerable for what may happen."

After that Hauskuld fared home, and Njal's sons woke up as he went, and asked their father who had come, but he told them that his foster-son Hauskuld had been there.

"He must have come to ask a boon for Lyting then," said Skarphedinn.

"So it was," says Njal.

"Ill was it then," says Grim.

"Hauskuld could not have thrown his shield before him," says Njal, "if thou hadst slain him, as it was meant thou shouldst."

"Let us throw no blame on our father," says Skarphedinn.

Now it is to be said that this atonement was kept between them afterwards.

CHAPTER CV.

OF AMUND THE BLIND.

THAT event happened three winters after at the Thingskala-Thing that Amund the blind was at the Thing; he was the son of Hauskuld Njal's son. He made men lead him about among the booths, and so he came to the booth inside which was Lyting of Samstede. He made them lead him into the booth till he came before Lyting.

"Is Lyting of Samstede here?" he asked.

"What dost thou want?" says Lyting.

"I want to know," says Amund, "what atonement thou wilt pay me for my father. I am base-born, and I have touched no fine."

"I have atoned for the slaying of thy father," says Lyting, "with a full price, and thy father's father and thy father's brothers took the money; but my brothers fell

without a price as outlaws; and so it was that I had both done an ill-deed, and paid dear for it."

"I ask not," says Amund, "as to thy having paid an atonement to them. I know that ye two are now friends, but I ask this, what atonement thou wilt pay to me?"

"None at all," says Lyting.

"I cannot see," says Amund, "how thou canst have right before God, when thou hast stricken me so near the heart; but all I can say is, that if I were blessed with the sight of both my eyes, I would have either a money fine for my father, or revenge man for man; and so may God judge between us."

After that he went out; but when he came to the door of the booth, he turned short round towards the inside. Then his eyes were opened, and he said,—

"Praised be the Lord! now I see what his will is."

With that he ran straight into the booth until he comes before Lyting, and smites him with an axe on the head, so that it sunk in up to the hammer, and gives the axe a pull towards him.

Lyting fell forwards and was dead at once.

Amund goes out to the door of the booth, and when he got to the very same spot on which he had stood when his eyes were opened, lo! they were shut again, and he was blind all his life after.

Then he made them lead him to Njal and his sons, and he told them of Lyting's slaying.

"Thou mayest not be blamed for this," says Njal, "for such things are settled by a higher power; but it is worth while to take warning from such events, lest we cut any short who have such near claims as Amund had."

After that Njal offered an atonement to Lyting's kinsmen. Hauskuld the priest of Whiteness had a share in bringing Lyting's kinsmen to take the fine, and then the matter was put to an award, and half the fines fell away for the sake of the claim which he seemed to have on Lyting.

After that men came forward with pledges of peace and good faith, and Lyting's kinsmen granted pledges to Amund. Men rode home from the Thing; and now all is quiet for a long while.

CHAPTER CVI.

OF VALGARD THE GUILEFUL.

VALGARD the guileful came back to Iceland that summer; he was then still heathen. He fared to Hof to his son Mord's house, and was there the winter over. He said to Mord—

"Here I have ridden far and wide all over the neighbourhood, and methinks I do not know it for the same. I came to Whiteness, and there I saw many tofts of booths and much ground levelled for building. I came to Thingskala-Thing, and there I saw all our booths broken down. What is the meaning of such strange things?"

"New priesthoods," answers Mord, "have been set up here, and a law for a Fifth Court, and men have declared themselves out of my Thing, and have gone over to Hauskuld's Thing."

"Ill hast thou repaid me," said Valgard, "for giving up to thee my priesthood, when thou hast handled it so little like a man, and now my wish is that thou shouldst pay them off by something that will drag them all down to death; and this thou canst do by setting them by the ears by tale-bearing, so that Njal's sons may slay Hauskuld; but there are many who will have the blood-feud after him, and so Njal's sons will be slain in that quarrel."

"I shall never be able to get that done," says Mord.

"I will give thee a plan," says Valgard; "thou shalt ask Njal's sons to thy house, and send them away with gifts, but thou shalt keep thy tale-bearing in the back ground until great friendship has sprung up between

you, and they trust thee no worse than their own selves. So wilt thou be able to avenge thyself on Skarphedinn for that he took thy money from thee after Gunnar's death; and in this wise, further on, thou wilt be able to seize the leadership when they are all dead and gone."

This plan they settled between them should be brought to pass; and Mord said—

"I would, father, that thou wouldst take on thee the new faith. Thou art an old man."

"I will not do that," says Valgard. "I would rather that thou shouldst cast off the faith, and see what follows then."

Mord said he would not do that. Valgard broke crosses before Mord's face, and all holy tokens. A little after Valgard took a sickness and breathed his last, and he was laid in a cairn by Hof.

CHAPTER CVII.

OF MORD AND NJAL'S SONS.

SOME while after Mord rode to Bergthorsknoll and saw Skarphedinn there; he fell into very fair words with them, and so he talked the whole day, and said he wished to be good friends with them, and to see much of them.

Skarphedinn took it all well, but said he had never sought for anything of the kind before. So it came about that he got himself into such great friendship with them, that neither side thought they had taken any good counsel unless the other had a share in it.

Njal always disliked his coming thither, and it often happened that he was angry with him.

It happened one day that Mord came to Bergthorsknoll, and Mord said to Njal's sons—

"I have made up my mind to give a feast yonder, and I mean to drink in my heirship after my father, but to that feast I wish to bid you, Njal's sons, and Kari; and at the same time I give you my word that ye shall not fare away giftless."

They promised to go, and now he fares home and makes ready the feast. He bade to it many householders, and that feast was very crowded.

Thither came Njal's sons and Kari. Mord gave Skarphedinn a brooch of gold, and a silver belt to Kari, and good gifts to Grim and Helgi.

They come home and boast of these gifts, and shew them to Njal. He said they would be bought full dear, "and take heed that ye do not repay the giver in the coin which he no doubt wishes to get."

CHAPTER CVIII.

OF THE SLANDER OF MORD VALGARD'S SON.

A LITTLE after Njal's sons and Hauskuld were to have their yearly feasts, and they were the first to bid Hauskuld to come to them.

Skarphedinn had a brown horse four winters old, both tall and sightly. He was a stallion, and had never yet been matched in fight. That horse Skarphedinn gave to Hauskuld, and along with him two mares. They all gave Hauskuld gifts, and assured him of their friendship.

After that Hauskuld bade them to his house at Ossaby, and had many guests to meet them, and a great crowd.

It happened that he had just then taken down his hall, but he had built three outhouses, and there the beds were made.

So all that were bidden came, and the feast went off very well. But when men were to go home Hauskuld picked out good gifts for them, and went a part of the way with Njal's sons.

The sons of Sigfus followed him and all the crowd,

and both sides said that nothing should ever come between them to spoil their friendship.

A little while after Mord came to Ossaby and called Hauskuld out to talk with him, and they went aside and spoke.

"What a difference in manliness there is," said Mord, "between thee and Njal's sons! Thou gavest them good gifts, but they gave thee gifts with great mockery."

"How makest thou that out?" says Hauskuld.

"They gave thee a horse which they called a 'dark horse,' and that they did out of mockery at thee, because they thought thee too untried. I can tell thee also that they envy thee the priesthood. Skarphedinn took it up as his own at the Thing when thou camest not to the Thing at the summoning of the Fifth Court, and Skarpheddin never means to let it go."

"That is not true," says Hauskuld, "for I got it back at the Folkmote last harvest."

"Then that was Njal's doing," says Mord. "They broke, too, the atonement about Lyting."

"I do not mean to lay that at their door," says Hauskuld.

"Well," says Mord, "thou canst not deny that when ye two, Skarphedinn and thou, were going east towards

Markfleet, an axe fell out from under his belt, and he meant to have slain thee then and there."

"It was his woodman's axe," says Hauskuld, "and I saw how he put it under his belt; and now, Mord, I will just tell thee this right out, that thou canst never say so much ill of Njal's sons as to make me believe it; but though there were aught in it, and it were true as thou sayest, that either I must slay them or they me, then would I far rather suffer death at their hands than work them any harm. But as for thee, thou art all the worse a man for having spoken this."

After that Mord fares home. A little after Mord goes to see Njal's sons, and he talks much with those brothers and Kari.

"I have been told," says Mord, "that Hauskuld has said that thou, Skarphedinn, hast broken the atonement made with Lyting; but I was made aware also that he thought that thou hadst meant some treachery against him when ye two fared to Markfleet. But still, methinks that was no less treachery when he bade you to a feast at his house, and stowed you away in an outhouse that was farthest from the house, and wood was then heaped round the outhouse all night, and he meant to burn you all inside; but it so happened that Hogni Gunnar's son came that night, and naught came of their onslaught, for

they were afraid of him. After that he followed you on your way and great band of men with him, then he meant to make another onslaught on you, and set Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son to kill thee; but their hearts failed them, and they dared not to fall on thee."

But when he had spoken thus, first of all they spoke against it, but the end of it was that they believed him, and from that day forth a coldness sprung up on their part towards Hauskuld, and they scarcely ever spoke to him when they met; but Hauskuld shewed them little deference, and so things went on for a while.

Next harvest Hauskuld fared east to Swinefell to a feast, and Flosi gave him a hearty welcome. Hildigunna was there too. Then Flosi spoke to Hauskuld and said,

"Hildigunna tells me that there is great coldness with you and Njal's sons, and methinks that is ill, and I will beg thee not to ride west, but I will get thee a homestead in Skaptarfell, and I will send my brother, Thorgeir, to dwell at Ossaby."

"Then some will say," says Hauskuld, "that I am flying thence for fear's sake, and that I will not have said."

"Then it is more likely that great trouble will arise," says Flosi.

"Ill is that then," says Hauskuld, "for I would rather fall unatoned, than that many should reap ill for my sake."

Hauskuld busked him to ride home a few nights after, but Flosi gave him a scarlet cloak, and it was embroidered with needlework down to the waist.

Hauskuld rode home to Ossaby, and now all is quiet for a while.

Hauskuld was so much beloved that few men were his foes, but the same ill-will went on between him and Njal's sons the whole winter through.

Njal had taken as his fosterchild, Thord, the son of Kari. He had also fostered Thorhall, the son of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. Thorhall was a strong man, and hardy both in body and mind, he had learnt so much law that he was the third greatest lawyer in Iceland.

Next spring was an early spring, and men are busy sowing their corn.

CHAPTER CIX.

OF MORD, AND NJAL'S SONS.

It happened one day that Mord came to Bergthorsknoll. He and Kari and Njal's sons fell a-talking at once, and

Mord slanders Hauskuld after his wont, and has now many new tales to tell, and does naught but egg Skarphedinn and them on to slay Hauskuld, and said he would be beforehand with them if they did not fall on him at once.

"I will let thee have thy way in this," says Skarphedinn, "if thou wilt fare with us, and have some hand in it."

"That I am ready to do," says Mord, and so they bound that fast with promises, and he was to come there that evening.

Bergthora asked Njal,—

"What are they talking about out of doors?"

"I am not in their counsels," says Njal, "but I was seldom left out of them when their plans were good."

Skarphedinn did not lie down to rest that evening, nor his brothers, nor Kari.

That same night, when it was well-nigh spent, came Mord Valgard's son, and Njal's sons and Kari took their weapons and rode away. They fared till they came to Ossaby, and bided there by a fence. The weather was good, and the sun just risen.

CHAPTER CX.

THE SLAYING OF HAUSKULD, THE PRIEST OF WHITENESS.

ABOUT that time Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness, awoke; he put on his clothes, and threw over him his cloak, Flosi's gift. He took his corn-sieve, and had his sword in his other hand, and walks towards the fence, and sows the corn as he goes.

Skarphedinn and his band had agreed that they would all give him a wound. Skarphedinn sprang up from behind the fence, but when Hauskuld saw him he wanted to turn away, then Skarphedinn ran up to him and said—

"Don't try to turn on thy heel, Whiteness priest," and hews at him, and the blow came on his head, and he fell on his knees. Hauskuld said these words when he fell:

"God help me, and forgive you!"

Then they all ran up to him and gave him wounds.

After that Mord said—

"A plan comes into my mind."

"What is that?" says Skarphedinn.

"That I shall fare home as soon as I can, but after

that I will fare up to Gritwater, and tell them the tidings, and say 'tis an ill deed; but I know surely that Thorgerda will ask me to give notice of the slaying, and I will do that, for that will be the surest way to spoil their suit. I will also send a man to Ossaby, and know how soon they take any counsel in the matter, and that man will learn all these tidings thence, and I will make believe that I have heard them from him."

"Do so by all means," says Skarphedinn.

Those brothers fared home, and Kari with them, and when they came home they told Njal the tidings.

"Sorrowful tidings are these," says Njal, "and such are ill to hear, for sooth to say this grief touches me so nearly, that methinks it were better to have lost two of my sons and that Hauskuld lived."

"It is some excuse for thee," says Skarphedinn, "that thou art an old man, and it is to be looked for that this touches thee nearly."

"But this," says Njal, "no less than old age, is why I grieve, that I know better than thou what will come after."

"What will come after?" says Skarphedinn.

"My death," says Njal, "and the death of my wife and of all my sons."

"What dost thou foretell for me?" says Kari.

"They will have hard work to go against thy good fortune, for thou wilt be more than a match for all of them."

This one thing touched Njal so nearly that he could never speak of it without shedding tears.

CHAPTER CXI.

OF HILDIGUNNA AND MORD VALGARD'S SON.

HILDIGUNNA woke up and found that Hauskuld was away out of his bed.

"Hard have been my dreams," she said, "and not good; but go and search for *him*, Hauskuld."

So they searched for him about the homestead and found him not.

By that time she had dressed herself; then she goes and two men with her, to the fence, and there they find Hauskuld slain.

Just then, too, came up Mord Valgard's son's shepherd, and told her that Njal's sons had gone down thence, "and," he said, "Skarphedinn called out to me and gave notice of the slaying as done by him."

"It were a manly deed," she says, "if one man had been at it."

She took the cloak and wiped off all the blood with it, and wrapped the gouts of gore up in it, and so folded it together and laid it up in her chest.

Now she sent a man up to Gritwater to tell the tidings thither, but Mord was there before him, and had already told the tidings. There, too, was come Kettle of the Mark.

Thorgerda said to Kettle—

"Now is Hauskuld dead as we know, and now bear in mind what thou promisedst to do when thou tookest him for thy fosterchild."

"It may well be," says Kettle, "that I promised very many things then, for I thought not that these days would ever befall us that have now come to pass; but yet I am come into a strait, for 'nose is next of kin to eyes,' since I have Njal's daughter to wife."

"Art thou willing, then," says Thorgerda, "that Mord should give notice of the suit for the slaying?"

"I know not that," says Kettle, "for methinks ill comes from him more often than good."

But as soon as ever Mord began to speak to Kettle he fared the same as others, in that he thought as though Mord would be true to him, and so the end of their counsel was that Mord should give notice of the slaying, and get ready the suit in every way before the Thing.

Then Mord fared down to Ossaby, and thither came nine neighbours who dwelt nearest the spot.

Mord had ten men with him. He shews the neighbours Hauskuld's wounds, and takes witness to the hurts, and names a man as the dealer of every wound save one; that he made as though he knew not who had dealt it, but that wound he had dealt himself. But the slaying he gave notice of at Skarphedinn's hand, and the wounds at his brothers' and Kari's.

After that he called on nine neighbours who dwelt nearest the spot to ride away from home to the Althing on the inquest.

After that he rode home. He scarce ever met Njal's sons, and when he did meet them, he was cross, and that was part of their plan.

The slaying of Hauskuld was heard over all the land, and was ill-spoken of. Njal's sons went to see Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and asked him for aid.

"Ye very well know that ye may look that I shall help you in all great suits, but still my heart is heavy about this suit, for there are many who have the blood feud, and this slaying is ill-spoken of over all the land."

Now Njal's sons fare home.

CHAPTER CXII.

THE PEDIGREE OF GUDMUND THE POWERFUL.

THERE was a man named Gudmund the powerful, who dwelt at Modruvale in Eyjafirth. He was the son of Eyjolf the son of Einar.* Gudmund was a mighty chief, wealthy in goods; he had in his house a hundred hired

* Einar was the son of Audun the bald, the son of Thorolf butter, the son of Thorstein the unstable, the son of Grim with the tuft. The mother of Gudmund was Hallbera, the daughter of Thorodd helm, but the mother of Hallbera was Reginleifa, daughter of Saemund the south-islander; after him is named Saemundslithe in Skagafirth. The mother of Eyjolf, Gudmund's father, was Valgerda Runolf's daughter; the mother of Valgerda was Valbjorg, her mother was Joruna the disowned, a daughter of King Oswald the Saint. The mother of Einar, the father of Eyjolf, was Helga, a daughter of Helgi the lean, who took Eyjafirth as the first settler. Helgi was the son of Eyvind the easterling. The mother of Helgi was Raforta, the daughter of Kjarval, the Erse King. The mother of Helga Helgi's daughter, was Thoruna the horned, daughter of Kettle flatnose, the son of Bjorn the rough-footed, the son of Grim, Lord of Sogn. The mother of Grim was Hervora, but the mother of Hervora was Thorgerda, daughter of King Haleyg of Helgeland. Thorlauga was the name of Gudmund the powerful's wife, she was a daughter of Atli the strong, the son of Eilif the eagle, the son of Bard, the son of Jalkettle, the son of Ref, the son of Skidi the old. Herdisa was the name of Thorlauga's mother, a daughter of Thord of

servants. He overbore in rank and weight all the chiefs in the north country, so that some left their homesteads, but some he put to death, and some gave up their priesthoods for his sake, and from him are come the greatest part of all the picked and famous families in the land, such as "the Point-dwellers" and the "Sturlungs" and the "Hvamdwellers," and the "Fleetmen," and Kettle the bishop, and many of the greatest men.

Gudmund was a friend of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and so he hoped to get his help.

CHAPTER CXIII.

OF SNORRI THE PRIEST, AND HIS STOCK.

THERE was a man named Snorri, who was surnamed the Priest. He dwelt at Helgafell before Gudruna Oswif's daughter bought the land of him, and dwelt there till she died of old age; but Snorri then went and dwelt at Hvamsfirth on Sælingdale's tongue. Thorgrim was the

the Head, the son of Bjorn butter-carrier, the son of Hroald, the son of Hrodlaug the sad, the son of Bjorn ironside, the son of Ragnar hairybreeks, the son of Sigurd Ring, the son of Randver, the son of Radbard. The mother of Herdisa Thord's daughter, was Thorgerda Skidi's daughter, her mother was Fridgerda, a daughter of Kjarval, the Erse King.

name of Snorri's father, and he was a son of Thorstein codcatcher.* Snorri was a great friend of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and he looked for help there also. Snorri was the wisest and shrewdest of all these men in Iceland who had not the gift of foresight. He was good to his friends, but grim to his foes.

At that time there was a great riding to the Thing out of all the Quarters, and men had many suits set on foot.

CHAPTER CXIV.

OF FLOSI THORD'S SON.

FLOSI hears of Hauskuld's slaying, and that brings him much grief and wrath, but still he kept his feelings well in hand. He was told how the suit had been set on foot, as has been said, for Hauskuld's slaying, and he said little

* Thorstein codcatcher was the son of Thorolf Mostrarskegg, the son of Ornolf fish-driver, but Ari the wise says he was the son of Thorgil Reydarside. Thorolf Mostrarskegg had to wife Oska, the daughter of Thorstein the red. The mother of Thorgrim was named Thora, a daughter of Oleif the shy, the son of Thorstein the red, the son of Oleif the white, the son of Ingialld, the son of Helgi; but the mother of Ingialld was Thorà, a daughter of Sigurd snake-eye, son of Ragnar hairybreeks; but the mother of Snorri the Priest, was Thordisa, the daughter of Sur, and the sister of Gisli.

about it. He sent word to Hall of the Side, his father-in-law, and to Ljot his son, that they must gather in a great company at the Thing. Ljot was thought the most hopeful man for a chief away there east. It had been foretold that if he could ride three summers running to the Thing, and come safe and sound home, that then he would be the greatest chief in all his family, and the oldest man. He had then ridden one summer to the Thing, and now he meant to ride the second time.

Flosi sent word to Kol Thorstein's son, and Glum the son of Hilldir the old, the son of Gerleif, the son of Aunund wallet-back, and to Modolf Kettle's son, and they all rode to meet Flosi.

Hall gave his word, too, to gather a great company, and Flosi rode till he came to Kirkby, to Surt Asbjorn's son. Then Flosi sent after Kolbein Egil's son, his brother's son, and he came to him there. Thence he rode to Headbrink. There dwelt Thorgrim the showy, the son of Thorkel the fair. Flosi begged him to ride to the Althing with him, and he said yea to the journey, and spoke thus to Flosi—

"Often hast thou been more glad, master, than thou art now, but thou hast some right to be so."

"Of a truth," said Flosi, "that hath now come on my hands, which I would give all my goods that it had

never happened. Ill seed has been sown, and so an ill crop will spring from it."

Thence he rode over Arnstacksheath, and so to Solheim that evening. There dwelt Lodmund Wolf's son, but he was a great friend of Flosi, and there he stayed that night, and next morning Lodmund rode with him into the Dale.

There dwelt Runolf, the son of Wolf Aurpriest.

Flosi said to Runolf—

"Here we shall have true stories as to the slaying of Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness. Thou art a truthful man, and hast got at the truth by asking, and I will trust to all that thou tellest me as to what was the cause of quarrel between them."

"There is no good in mincing the matter," said Runolf, "but we must say outright that he has been slain for less than no cause; and his death is a great grief to all men. No one thinks it so much a loss as Njal, his foster-father."

"Then they will be ill off for help from men," says Flosi; "and they will find no one to speak up for them."

"So it will be," says Runolf, "unless it be otherwise foredoomed."

"What has been done in the suit?" says Flosi.

"Now the neighbours have been summoned on the inquest," says Runolf, "and due notice given of the suit for manslaughter."

"Who took that step?" asks Flosi.

"Mord Valgard's son," says Runolf.

"How far is that to be trusted?" says Flosi.

"He is of my kin," says Runolf; "but still if I tell the truth of him, I must say that more men reap ill than good from him. But this one thing I will ask of thee, Flosi, that thou givest rest to thy wrath, and takest the matter up in such a way as may lead to the least trouble. For Njal will make a good offer, and so will others of the best men."

"Ride thou then to the Thing, Runolf," said Flosi, "and thy words shall have much weight with me, unless things turn out worse than they should."

After that they cease speaking about it, and Runolf promised to go to the Thing.

Runolf sent word to Hafr the wise, his kinsman, and he rode thither at once.

Thence Flosi rode to Ossaby.

CHAPTER CXV.

OF FLOSI AND HILDIGUNNA.

HILDIGUNNA was out of doors, and said, "Now shall all the men of my household be out of doors when Flosi rides into the yard; but the women shall sweep the house and deck it with hangings, and make ready the high-seat for Flosi."

Then Flosi rode into the town, and Hildigunna turned to him and said—

"Come in safe and sound and happy kinsman, and my heart is fain at thy coming hither."

"Here," says Flosi, "we will break our fast, and then we will ride on."

Then their horses were tethered, and Flosi went into the sitting-room and sat him down, and spurned the high-seat away from him on the dais, and said—

"I am neither king nor earl, and there is no need to make a high-seat for me to sit on, nor is there any need to make a mock of me."

Hildigunna was standing close by, and said—

"It is ill if it mislikes thee, for this we did with a whole heart."

"If thy heart is whole towards me, then what I do will praise itself if it be well done, but it will blame itself if it be ill done."

Hildigunna laughed a cold laugh, and said—

"There is nothing new in that, we will go nearer yet ere we have done."

She sat her down by Flosi, and they talked long and low.

After that the board was laid, and Flosi and his band washed their hands. Flosi looked hard at the towel and saw that it was all in rags, and had one end torn off. He threw it down on the bench and would not wipe himself with it, but tore off a piece of the table-cloth, and wiped himself with that, and then threw it to his men.

After that Flosi sat down to the board and bade men eat.

Then Hildigunna came into the room and went before Flosi, and threw her hair off her eyes and wept.

"Heavy-hearted art thou now, kinswoman," said Flosi, "when thou weepest, but still it is well that thou shouldst weep for a good husband."

"What vengeance or help shall I have of thee?" she says.

"I will follow up thy suit," said Flosi, "to the utmost limit of the law, or strive for that atonement which good

men and true shall say that we ought to have as full amends."

"Hauskuld would avenge thee," she said, "if he had the blood-feud after thee."

"Thou lackest not grimness," answered Flosi, "and what thou wantest is plain."

"Arnor Ornolf's son, of Forswaterwood," said Hildigunna, "had done less wrong towards Thord Frey's priest thy father; and yet thy brothers Kolbein and Egil slew him at Skaptarfells-Thing."

Then Hildigunna went back into the hall and unlocked her chest, and then she took out the cloak, Flosi's gift, and in it Hauskuld had been slain, and there she had kept it, blood and all. Then she went back into the sitting room with the cloak; she went up silently to Flosi. Flosi had just then eaten his full, and the board was cleared. Hildigunna threw the cloak over Flosi, and the gore rattled down all over him.

Then she spoke and said—

"This cloak, Flosi, thou gavest to Hauskuld, and now I will give it back to thee; he was slain in it, and I call God and all good men to witness, that I adjure thee, by all the might of thy Christ, and by thy manhood and bravery, to take vengeance for all those

wounds which he had on his dead body, or else to be called every man's dastard."

Flosi threw the cloak off him and hurled it into her lap, and said—

"Thou art the greatest hell-hag, and thou wishest that we should take that course which will be the worst for all of us. But 'women's counsel is ever cruel.'"

Flosi was so stirred at this, that sometimes he was blood-red in the face, and sometimes ashy pale as withered grass, and sometimes blue as death.

Flosi and his men rode away; he rode to Holtford, and there waits for the sons of Sigfus and other of his men.

Ingialld dwelt at the Springs; he was the brother of Rodny, Hauskuld Njal's son's mother.* Ingialld had to wife Thraslauga, the daughter of Egil, the son of Thord Frey's priest.† Flosi sent word to Ingialld to come to him, and Ingialld went at once, with fourteen men. They were all of his household. Ingialld was a tall man and a strong, and slow to meddle with other men's business,

* They were children of Hauskuld the white, the son of Ingialld the strong, the son of Gerfinn the red, the son of Solvi, the son of Thorstein baresarks-bane.

† The mother of Egil was Thraslauga, the daughter of Thorstein titling; the mother of Thraslauga was Unna, the daughter of Eyvind Karf.

one of the bravest of men, and very bountiful to his friends.

Flosi greeted him well, and said to him, "Great trouble hath now come on me and my brothers-in-law, and it is hard to see our way out of it; I beseech thee not to part from my suit until this trouble is past and gone."

"I am come into a strait myself," said Ingialld, "for the sake of the ties that there are between me and Njal and his sons, and other great matters which stand in the way."

"I thought," said Flosi, "when I gave away my brother's daughter to thee, that thou gavest me thy word to stand by me in every suit."

"It is most likely," says Ingialld, "that I shall do so, but still I will now, first of all, ride home, and thence to the Thing."

CHAPTER CXVI.

OF FLOSI AND MORD AND THE SONS OF SIGFUS.

THE sons of Sigfus heard how Flosi was at Holtford, and they rode thither to meet him, and there were Kettle of the Mark, and Lambi his brother, Thorkell and Mord,

the sons of Sigfus, Sigmund their brother, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and Vebrand Hamond's son.

Flosi stood up to meet them, and greeted them gladly. So they went down to the river. Flosi had the whole story from them about the slaying, and there was no difference between them and Kettle of the Mark's story.

Flosi spoke to Kettle of the Mark, and said—

"This now I ask of thee; how tightly are your hearts knit as to this suit, thou and the other sons of Sigfus?"

"My wish is," said Kettle, "that there should be peace between us, but yet I have sworn an oath not to part from this suit till it has been brought somehow to an end, and to lay my life on it."

"Thou art a good man and true," said Flosi, "and it is well to have such men with one."

Then Grani Gunnar's son and Lambi Sigurd's son both spoke together, and said—

"We wish for outlawry and death."

"It is not given us," said Flosi, "both to share and choose, we must take what we can get."

"I have had it in my heart," says Grani, "ever since they slew Thrain by Markfleet, and after that his son Hauskuld, never to be atoned with them by a lasting

peace, for I would willingly stand by when they were all slain, every man of them."

"Thou hast stood so near to them," said Flosi, "that thou mightest have avenged these things hadst thou had the heart and manhood. Methinks thou and many others now ask for what ye would give much money hereafter never to have had a share in. I see this clearly, that though we slay Njal or his sons, still they are men of so great worth, and of such good family, that there will be such a blood feud and hue and cry after them, that we shall have to fall on our knees before many a man, and beg for help, ere we get an atonement and find our way out of this strait. Ye may make up your minds, then, that many will become poor who before had great goods, but some of you will lose both goods and life."

Mord Valgard's son rode to meet Flosi, and said he would ride to the Thing with him with all his men. Flosi took that well, and raised a matter of a wedding with him, that he should give away Rannveiga his daughter to Starkad Flosi's brother's son, who dwelt at Staffell. Flosi did this because he thought he would so make sure both of his faithfulness and force.

Mord took the wedding kindly, but handed the matter over to Gizur the white, and bade him talk about it at the Thing.

Mord had to wife Thorkatla, Gizur the white's daughter.

They two, Mord and Flosi, rode both together to the Thing, and talked the whole day. and no man knew aught of their counsel.

CHAPTER CXVII.

NJAL AND SKARPHEDINN TALK TOGETHER.

Now, we must say how Njal said to Skarphedinn.

"What plan have ye laid down for yourselves, thou and thy brothers and Kari?"

"Little reck we of dreams in most matters," said Skarphedinn; "but if thou must know, we shall ride to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and thence to the Thing; but what meanest thou to do about thine own journey, father?"

"I shall ride to the Thing," says Njal, "for it belongs to my honour not to be severed from your suit so long as I live. I ween that many men will have good words to say of me, and so I shall stand you in good stead, and do you no harm."

There, too, was Thorhall Asgrim's son, and Njal's foster-son. The sons of Njal laughed at him because

he was clad in a coat of russet, and asked how long he meant to wear that?

"I shall have thrown it off," he said, "when I have to follow up the blood-feud for my foster-father."

"There will ever be most good in thee," said Njal, "when there is most need of it."

So they all busked them to ride away from home, and were nigh thirty men in all, and rode till they came to Thursowater. Then came after them Njal's kinsmen, Thorleif crow, and Thorgrim the big; they were Holt-Thorir's sons, and offered their help and following to Njal's sons, and they took that gladly.

So they rode all together across Thursowater, until they came on Laxwater bank, and took a rest and baited their horses there, and there Hjallti Skeggi's son came to meet them, and Njal's sons fell to talking with him, and they talked long and low.

"Now, I will shew," said Hjallti, "that I am not blackhearted; Njal has asked me for help, and I have agreed to it, and given my word to aid him; he has often given me and many others the worth of it in cunning counsel."

Hjallti tells Njal all about Flosi's doings. They sent Thorhall on to Tongue to tell Asgrim that they would be there that evening; and Asgrim made ready at once,

and was out of doors to meet them when Njal rode into the town."

Njal was clad in a blue cape, and had a felt hat on his head, and a small axe in his hand. Asgrim helped Njal off his horse, and led him and sate him down in his own seat. After that they all went in, Njal's sons and Kari. Then Asgrim went out.

Hjallti wished to turn away, and thought there were too many there; but Asgrim caught hold of his reins, and said he should never have his way in riding off, and made men unsaddle their horses, and led Hjallti in and sate him down by Njal's side; but Thorleif and his brother sat on the other bench and their men with them.

Asgrim sate him down on a stool before Njal, and asked,

"What says thy heart about our matter?"

"It speaks rather heavily," says Njal, "for I am afraid that we shall have no lucky men with us in the suit; but I would, friend, that thou shouldest send after all the men who belong to thy Thing, and ride to the Althing with me."

"I have always meant to do that," says Asgrim; "and this I will promise thee at the same time—that I will never leave thy cause while I can get any men to follow me."

But all those who were in the house thanked him, and said, that was bravely spoken. They were there that night, but the day after all Asgrim's band came thither.

And after that they all rode together till they come up on the Thing-field, and fit up their booths.

CHAPTER CXVIII.

ASGRIM AND NJAL'S SONS PRAY MEN FOR HELP.

By that time Flosi had come to the Thing, and filled all his booths. Runolf filled the Dale-dwellers' booths, and Mord the booths of the men from Rangriver. Hall of the Side had long since come from the east, but scarce any of the other men; but still Hall of the Side had come with a great band, and joined this at once to Flosi's company, and begged him to take an atonement and to make peace.

Hall was a wise man and good-hearted. Flosi answered him well in everything, but gave way in nothing.

Hall asked what men had promised him help? Flosi named Mord Valgard's son, and said he had asked for his daughter at the hand of his kinsman Starkad.

Hall said she was a good match, but it was ill dealing with Mord, "and that thou wilt put to the proof ere this Thing be over."

After that they ceased talking.

One day Njal and Asgrim had a long talk in secret.

Then all at once Asgrim sprang up and said to Njal's sons—

"We must set about seeking friends, that we may not be overborne by force; for this suit will be followed up boldly."

Then Asgrim went out, and Helgi Njal's son next; then Kari Solmund's son; then Grim Njal's son; then Skarphedinn; then Thorhall; then Thorgrim the big; then Thorleif crow.

They went to the booth of Gizur the white and inside it. Gizur stood up to meet them, and bade them sit down and drink.

"Not thitherward," says Asgrim, "tends our way, and we will speak our errand out loud, and not mutter and mouth about it. What help shall I have from thee, as thou art my kinsman?"

"Jorunn my sister," said Gizur, "would wish that I should not shrink from standing by thee; and so it shall be now and hereafter, that we will both of us have the same fate."

Asgrim thanked him, and went away afterwards.

Then Skarphedinn asked, "Whither shall we go now?"

"To the booths of the men of Olfus," says Asgrim.

So they went thither, and Asgrim asked whether Skapti Thorod's son were in the booth? He was told that he was. Then they went inside the booth.

Skapti sate on the cross bench, and greeted Asgrim, and he took the greeting well.

Skapti offered Asgrim a seat by his side, but Asgrim said he should only stay there a little while, "but still we have an errand to thee."

"Let me hear it?" says Skapti.

"I wish to beg thee for thy help, that thou wilt stand by us in our suit."

"One thing I had hoped," says Skapti, "and that is, that neither you nor your troubles would ever come into my dwelling."

"Such things are ill-spoken," says Asgrim, "when a man is the last to help others, when most lies on his aid."

"Who is yon man," says Skapti, "before whom four men walk, a big burly man, and pale-faced, unlucky-looking, well-knit, and troll-like?"

"My name is Skarphedinn," he answers, "and thou

hast often seen me at the Thing ; but in this I am wiser than thou, that I have no need to ask what thy name is. Thy name is Skapti Thorod's son, but before thou calledst thyself 'Bristlepoll,' after thou hadst slain Kettle of Elda ; then thou shavedst thy poll, and puttedst pitch on thy head, and then thou hiredst thralls to cut up a sod of turf, and thou creptest underneath it to spend the night. After that thou wentest to Thorolf Lopt's son of Eyrar, and he took thee on board, and bore thee out here in his meal sacks."

After that Asgrim and his band went out, and Skarphedinn asked —

"Whither shall we go now ?"

"To Snorri the Priest's booth," says Asgrim.

Then they went to Snorri's booth. There was a man outside before the booth, and Asgrim asked whether Snorri were in the booth.

The man said he was.

Asgrim went into the booth, and all the others. Snorri was sitting on the cross bench, and Asgrim went and stood before him, and hailed him well.

Snorri took his greeting blithely, and bade him sit down.

Asgrim said he should be only a short time there, "but we have an errand with thee."

Snorri bade him tell it.

"I would," said Asgrim, "that thou wouldst come with me to the court, and stand by me with thy help, for thou art a wise man, and a great man of business."

"Suits fall heavy on us now," says Snorri the Priest, "and now many men push forward against us, and so we are slow to take up the troublesome suits of other men from other quarters."

"Thou mayest stand excused," says Asgrim, "for thou art not in our debt for any service."

"I know," says Snorri, "that thou art a good man and true, and I will promise thee this, that I will not be against thee, and not yield help to thy foes."

Asgrim thanked him, and Snorri the Priest asked—

"Who is that man before whom four go, pale-faced, and sharp-featured, and who shews his front teeth, and has his axe aloft on his shoulder."

"My name is Hedinn," he says, "but some men call me Skarphedinn by my full name; but what more hast thou to say to me."

"This," said Snorri the Priest, "that methinks thou art a well-knit, ready-handed man, but yet I guess that the best part of thy good fortune is past, and I ween thou hast now not long to live.'

"That is well," says Skarphedinn, "for that is a debt

we all have to pay, but still it were more needful to avenge thy father than to foretell my fate in this way."

"Many have said that before," says Snorri, "and I will not be angry at such words."

After that they went out, and got no help there. Then they fared to the booths of the men of Skagafirth. There Hafr * the wealthy had his booth. The mother of Hafr was named Thoruna, she was a daughter of Asbjorn baldpate of Myrka, the son of Hrosbjorn.

Asgrim and his band went into the booth, and Hafr sate in the midst of it, and was talking to a man.

Asgrim went up to him, and hailed him well; he took it kindly, and bade him sit down.

"This I would ask of thee," said Asgrim, "that thou wouldst grant me and my sons-in-law help."

Hafr answered sharp and quick, and said he would have nothing to do with their troubles.

"But still I must ask who that pale-faced man is before whom four men go, so ill-looking, as though he had come out of the sea-crags."

"Never mind, milksop that thou art!" said Skarphedinn, "who I am, for I will dare to go forward

* Hafr was the son of Thorkel, the son of Eric of Gooddale, the son of Geirmund, the son of Hroald, the son of Eric Frizzlebeard who felled Gritgarth in Soknardale in Norway.

wherever thou standest before me, and little would I fear though such striplings were in my path. 'Twere rather thy duty, too, to get back thy sister Swanlauga, whom Eydis ironsword and his messmate Stediakoll took away out of thy house, but thou didst not dare to do aught against them."

"Let us go out," said Asgrim, "there is no hope of help here."

Then they went out to the booths of men of Modruvale, and asked whether Gudmund the powerful were in the booth, but they were told he was.

Then they went into the booth. There was a high seat in the midst of it, and there sate Gudmund the powerful.

Asgrim went and stood before him, and hailed him.

Gudmund took his greeting well, and asked him to sit down.

"I will not sit," said Asgrim, "but I wish to pray thee for help, for thou art a bold man and a mighty chief."

"I will not be against thee, said Gudmund, "but if I see fit to yield thee help, we may well talk of that afterwards," and so he treated them well and kindly in every way.

Asgrim thanked him for his words, and Gudmund said—

"There is one man in your band at whom I have gazed for a while, and he seems to me more terrible than most men that I have seen."

"Which is he?" says Asgrim.

"Four go before him," says Gudmund; "dark brown is his hair, and pale is his face; tall of growth and sturdy. So quick and shifty in his manliness, that I would rather have his following than that of ten other men; but yet the man is unlucky-looking."

"I know," said Skarphedinn, "that thou speakest at me, but it does not go in the same way as to luck with me and thee. I have blame, indeed, from the slaying of Hauskuld, the Whiteness Priest, as is fair and right; but both Thorkel foulmouth and Thorir Helgi's son spread abroad bad stories about thee, and that has tried thy temper very much."

Then they went out, and Skarphedinn said—

"Whither shall we go now?"

"To the booths of the men of Lightwater," said Asgrim.

There Thorkel foulmouth* had set up his booth.

* Thorkel was the son of Thorgeir the Priest, the son of Tjorfi, the son of Thorkel the long; but the mother of Thorgeir was Thoruna, the daughter of Thorstein, the son of Sigmund, son of Bard of the Nip. The mother of Thorkel foulmouth was named Gudrida; she

Thorkel foulmouth had been abroad and worked his way to fame in other lands. He had slain a robber east in Jemtland's wood, and then he fared on east into Sweden, and was a messmate of Saurkvir the churl, and they harried eastward ho; but to the east of Baltic side* Thorkel had to fetch water for them one evening; then he met a wild man of the woods,† and struggled against him long; but the end of it was that he slew the wild man. Thence he fared east into Adalsyssla, and there he slew a flying fire-drake. After that he fared back to Sweden, and thence to Norway, and so out to Iceland, and let these deeds of derring do be carved over his shut bed, and on the stool before his highseat. He fought, too, on Lightwater way with his brothers against Gudmund the powerful, and the men of Lightwater won the day. He and Thorir Helgi's son spread abroad bad stories about Gudmund. Thorkel said there was no man in Iceland with whom he would not

was a daughter of Thorkel the black of Hleidrargarth, the son of Thorir tag, the son of Kettle the seal, the son of Ornolf, the son of Bjornolf, the son of Grim hairy-cheek, the son of Kettle hæing, the son of Hallbjorn halftroll.

* "Baltic side." This probably means a part of the Finnish coast in the Gulf of Bothnia. See Fornm. Sögur xii. 264-5.

† "Wild man of the woods." In the original Finngálkn, a fabulous monster, half man and half beast.

fight in single combat, or yield an inch to, if need were. He was called Thorkel foulmouth, because he spared no one with whom he had to do either in word or deed.

CHAPTER CXIX.

OF SKARPHEDINN AND THORKEL FOULMOUTH.

ASGRIM and his fellows went to Thorkel foulmouth's booth, and Asgrim said then to his companions, "This booth Thorkel foulmouth owns, a great champion, and it were worth much to us to get his help. We must here take heed in everything, for he is self-willed and bad tempered; and now I will beg thee, Skarphedinn, not to let thyself be led into our talk."

Skarphedinn smiled at that. He was so clad, he had on a blue kirtle and gray breeks, and black shoes on his feet, coming high up his leg; he had a silver belt about him, and that same axe in his hand with which he slew Thrain, and which he called the "Ogress of War," a round buckler, and a silken band round his brow, and his hair was brushed back behind his ears. He was the most soldier-like of men, and by that all men knew him. He went in his appointed place, and neither before nor behind.

Now they went into the booth and into its inner chamber. Thorkel sate in the middle of the crossbench, and his men away from him on all sides. Asgrim hailed him, and Thorkel took the greeting well, and Asgrim said to him—

"For this have we come hither, to ask help of thee, and that thou wouldst come to the Court with us."

"What need can ye have of my help," said Thorkel, "when ye have already gone to Gudmund; he must surely have promised thee his help?"

"We could not get his help," says Asgrim.

"Then Gudmund thought the suit likely to make him foes," said Thorkel; "and so no doubt it will be, for such deeds are the worst that have ever been done; nor do I know what can have driven you to come hither to me, and to think that I should be easier to undertake your suit than Gudmund, or that I would back a wrongful quarrel."

Then Asgrim held his peace, and thought it would be hard work to win him over.

Then Thorkel went on and said, "Who is that big and ugly fellow, before whom four men go, pale-faced and sharp featured, and unlucky looking, and cross grained?"

"My name is Skarphedinn," said Skarphedinn, "and thou hast no right to pick me out, a guiltless man, for thy railing. It never has befallen me to make my father bow down before me, or to have fought against him, as thou didst with thy father. Thou hast ridden little to the Althing, or toiled in quarrels at it, and no doubt it is handier for thee to mind thy milking pails at home than to be here at Axewater in idleness. But stay, it were as well if thou pickedst out from thy teeth that steak of mare's rump which thou atest ere thou rodest to the Thing, while thy shepherd looked on all the while, and wondered that thou couldst work such filthiness!"

Then Thorkel sprang up in mickle wrath, and clutched his short sword and said—

"This sword I got in Sweden when I slew the greatest champion, but since then I have slain many a man with it, and as soon as ever I reach thee I will drive it through thee, and thou shalt take that for thy bitter words."

Skarphedinn stood with his axe aloft, and smiled scornfully and said—

"This axe I had in my hand when I leapt twelve ells across Markfleet, and slew Thrain Sigfus' son, and eight of them stood before me, and none of them could

touch me. Never have I aimed weapon at man that I have not smitten him."

And with that he tore himself from his brothers, and Kari his brother-in-law, and strode forward to Thorkel.

Then Skarphedinn said—

"Now, Thorkel foulmouth, do one of these two things: sheathe thy sword and sit thee down, or I drive the axe into thy head and cleave thee down to the chine."

Then Thorkel sate him down and sheathed the sword, and such a thing never happened to him either before or since.

Then Asgrim and his band go out, and Skarphedinn said—

"Whither shall we now go?"

"Home to our booths," answered Asgrim.

"Then we fare back to our booths wearied of begging," says Skarphedinn.

"In many places," said Asgrim, "hast thou been rather sharp-tongued, but here now, in what Thorkel had a share methinks thou hast only treated him as is fitting."

Then they went home to their booths, and told Njal, word for word, all that had been done.

"Things," he said, "draw on to what must be."

Now Gudmund the powerful heard what had passed between Thorkel and Skarphedinn, and said—

"Ye all know how things fared between us and the men of Lightwater, but I have never suffered such scorn and mocking at their hands, as has befallen Thorkel from Skarphedinn, and this is just as it should be."

Then he said to Einar of Thvera, his brother, "Thou shalt go with all my band, and stand by Njal's sons when the courts go out to try suits; but if they need help next summer, then I myself will yield them help."

Einar agreed to that, and sent and told Asgrim, and Asgrim said—

"There is no man like Gudmund for nobleness of mind," and then he told it to Njal.

CHAPTER CXX.

OF THE PLEADING OF THE SUIT.

THE next day Asgrim, and Gizur the white, and Hjallti Skeggi's son, and Einar of Thvera, met together. There too was Mord Valgard's son; he had then let the suit fall from his hand, and given it over to the sons of Sigfus.

Then Asgrim spoke.

"Thee first I speak to about this matter, Gizur the white, and thee Hjallti, and thee Einar, that I may tell you how the suit stands. It will be known to all of you that Mord took up the suit, but the truth of the matter is, that Mord was at Hauskuld's slaying, and wounded him with that wound, for giving which no man was named. It seems to me, then, that this suit must come to naught by reason of a lawful flaw."

"Then we will plead it at once," says Hjallti.

"It is not good counsel," said Thorhall Asgrim's son, "that this should not be hidden until the courts are set."

"How so?" asks Hjallti.

"If," said Thorhall, "they knew now at once that the suit has been wrongly set on foot, then they may still save the suit by sending a man home from the Thing, and summoning the neighbours from home over again, and calling on them to ride to the Thing, and then the suit will be lawfully set on foot."

"Thou art a wise man, Thorhall," say they, "and we will take thy counsel."

After that each man went to his booth.

The sons of Sigfus gave notice of their suits at the Hill of Laws, and asked in what Quarter-Courts they lay, and in what house in the district the defendants dwelt.

But on the Friday night the courts were to go out to try suits, and so the Thing was quiet up to that day.

Many sought to bring about an atonement between them, but Flosi was steadfast; but others were still more wordy, and things looked ill.

Now the time comes when the courts were to go out, on the Friday evening. Then the whole body of men at the Thing went to the courts. Flosi stood south at the court of the men of Rangriver, and his band with him. There with him was Hall of the Side, and Runolf of the Dale, Wolf Aurpriest's son, and those other men who had promised Flosi help.

But north of the court of the men of Rangriver stood Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Gizur the white, Hjallti Skeggi's son, and Einar of Thvera. But Njal's sons were at home at their booth, and Kari and Thorleif crow, and Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorgrim the big. They sate all with their weapons, and their band looked safe from onslaught.

Njal had already prayed the judges to go into the court, and now the sons of Sigfus plead their suit. They took witness and bade Njal's sons to listen to their oath; after that they took their oath, and then they declared their suit; then they brought forward witness of the notice, then they bade the neighbours on the inquest to

take their seats, then they called on Njal's sons to challenge the inquest.

Then up stood Thorhall Asgrim's son, and took witness, and forbade the inquest by a protest to utter their finding; and his ground was, that he who had given notice of the suit was truly under the ban of the law, and was himself an outlaw.

"Of whom speakest thou this?" says Flosi.

"Mord Valgard's son," said Thorhall, "fared to Hauskuld's slaying with Njal's sons, and wounded him with that wound for which no man was named when witness was taken to the death-wounds; and ye can say nothing against this, and so the suit comes to naught."

CHAPTER CXXI.

OF THE AWARD OF ATONEMENT BETWEEN FLOSI AND NJAL.

THEN Njal stood up and said—

"This I pray, Hall of the Side, and Flosi, and all the sons of Sigfus, and all our men too, that ye will not go away, but listen to my words."

They did so, and then he spoke thus—

"It seems to me as though this suit were come to naught, and it is likely it should, for it hath sprung from

an ill root. I will let you all know that I loved Hauskuld more than my own sons, and when I heard that he was slain, methought the sweetest light of my eyes was quenched, and I would rather have lost all my sons, and that he were alive. Now I ask thee, Hall of the Side, and thee Runolf of the Dale, and thee Hjallti Skeggi's son, and thee Einar of Thvera, and thee Hafr the wise, that I may be allowed to make an atonement for the slaying of Hauskuld on my sons' behalf; and I wish that those men who are best fitted to do so shall utter the award."

Gizur, and Hafr, and Einar, spoke each on their own part, and prayed Flosi to take an atonement, and promised him their friendship in return.

Flosi answered them well in all things, but still did not give his word.

Then Hall of the Side said to Flosi—

"Wilt thou now keep thy word, and grant me my boon which thou hast already promised me, when I put beyond sea Thorgrim, the son of Kettle the fat, thy kinsman, when he had slain Halli the red."

"I will grant it thee, father-in-law," said Flosi, "for that alone wilt thou ask which will make my honour greater than it erewhile was."

"Then," said Hall, "my wish is that thou shouldst be

quickly atoned, and lettest good men and true make an award, and so buy the friendship of good and worthy men."

"I will let you all know," said Flosi, "that I will do according to the word of Hall, my father-in-law, and other of the worthiest men, that he and others of the best men on each side, lawfully named, shall make this award. Methinks Njal is worthy that I should grant him this."

Njal thanked him and all of them, and others who were by thanked them too, and said that Flosi had behaved well.

Then Flosi said—

"Now will I name my daysmen:*—First, I name Hall, my father-in-law; Auzur from Broadwater; Surt Asbjorn's son of Kirkby; Modolf Kettle's son"—he dwelt then at Asar—"Hafr the wise; and Runolf of the Dale; and it is scarce worth while to say that these are the fittest men out of all my company."

Now he bade Njal to name his daysmen, and then Njal stood up, and said—

"First of these I name, Asgrim Ellidagrim's son;

* The true English word for "arbitrator," or "umpire." See Job ix. 33—"Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." See also Holland's Translation of Livy, page 137—"A more shameful precedent for the time to come: namely, that umpires and *daies-men* should convert the thing in suit unto their own and proper vantage."

and Hjallti Skeggis' son; Gizur the white; Einar of Thvera; Snorri the priest; and Gudmund the powerful."

After that Njal and Flosi, and the sons of Sigfus shook hands, and Njal pledged his hand on behalf of all his sons, and of Kari, his son-in-law, that they would hold to what those twelve men doomed; and one might say that the whole body of men at the Thing was glad at that.

Then men were sent after Snorri and Gudmund, for they were in their booths.

Then it was given out that the judges in this award would sit in the Court of Laws, but all the others were to go away.

CHAPTER CXXII.

OF THE JUDGES.

THEN Snorri the priest spoke thus,—"Now are we here twelve judges to whom these suits are handed over, now I will beg you all that we may have no stumblingblocks in these suits, so that they may not be atoned."

"Will ye," said Gudmund, "award either the lesser or the greater outlawry? Shall they be banished from the district, or from the whole land?"

"Neither of them," says Snorri, "for those banishments are often ill fulfilled, and men have been slain for that sake, and atonements broken, but I will award

so great a money fine that no man shall have had a higher price here in the land than Hauskuld."

They all spoke well of his words.

Then they talked over the matter, and could not agree which should first utter how great he thought the fine ought to be, and so the end of it was that they cast lots, and the lot fell on Snorri to utter it.

Then Snorri said, "I will not sit long over this, I will now tell you what my utterance is, I will let Hauskuld be atoned for with triple manfines, but that is six hundred in silver. Now ye shall change it, if ye think it too much or too little."

They said that they would change it in nothing.

"This too shall be added," he said, "that all the money shall be paid down here at the Thing."

Then Gizur the white spoke and said—

"Methinks that can hardly be, for they will not have enough money to pay their fines."

"I know what Snorri wishes," said Gudmund the powerful, "he wants that all we daysmen should give such a sum as our bounty will bestow, and then many will do as we do."

Hall of the Side thanked him, and said he would willingly give as much as any one else gave, and then all the other daysmen agreed to that.

After that they went away, and settled between them that Hall should utter the award at the Hill of Laws.

So the bell was rung, and all men went to the Hill of Laws, and Hall of the Side stood up and spoke—

"In this suit, in which we have come to an award, we have been all well agreed, and we have awarded six hundred in silver, and half this sum we the daysmen will pay, but it must all be paid up here at the Thing. But it is my prayer to all the people that each man will give something for God's sake."

All answered well to that, and then Hall took witness to the award, that no one should be able to break it.

Njal thanked them for their award, but Skarphedinn stood by, and held his peace, and smiled scornfully.

Then men went from the Hill of Laws and to their booths, but the daysmen gathered together in the freemen's churchyard, the money which they had promised to give.

Njal's sons handed over that money which they had by them, and Kari did the same, and that came to a hundred in silver.

Njal took out that money which he had with him, and that was another hundred in silver.

So this money was all brought before the Hill of

Laws, and then men gave so much, that not a penny was wanting.

Then Njal took a silken scarf and a pair of boots and laid them on the top of the heap.

After that, Hall said to Njal, that he should go to fetch his sons, "but I will go for Flosi, and now each must give the other pledges of peace."

Then Njal went home to his booth, and spoke to his sons and said, "Now are our suits come into a fair way of settlement, now are we men atoned, for all the money has been brought together in one place; and now either side is to go and grant the other peace and pledges of good faith. I will therefore ask you this, my sons, not to spoil these things in any way."

Skarphedinn stroked his brow, and smiled scornfully. So they all go to the Court of Laws.

Hall went to meet Flosi and said—

"Go thou now to the Court of Laws, for now all the money has been bravely paid down, and it has been brought together in one place."

Then Flosi bade the sons of Sigfus to go up with him, and they all went out of their booths. They came from the east, but Njal went from the west to the Court of Laws, and his sons with him.

Skarphedinn went to the middle bench and stood there.

Flosi went into the Court of Laws to look closely at the money, and said—

"This money is both great and good, and well paid down, as was to be looked for."

After that he took up the scarf, and waved it, and asked—

"Who may have given this?"

But no man answered him.

A second time he waved the scarf, and asked—

"Who may have given this?" and laughed, but no man answered him.

Then Flosi said—

"How is it that none of you knows who has owned this gear, or is it that none dares to tell me?"

"Who?" said Skarphedinn, "dost thou think, has given it?"

"If thou must know," said Flosi, "then I will tell thee; I think that thy father the 'Beardless Carle' must have given it, for many know not who look at him whether he is more a man than a woman."

"Such words are ill-spoken," said Skarphedinn, "to make game of him, an old man, and no man of any worth has ever done so before. Ye may know, too, that he is a man, for he has had sons by his wife, and few of our kinsfolk have fallen unatoned

by our house, so that we have not had vengeance for them."

Then Skarphedinn took to himself the silken scarf, but threw a pair of blue breeks to Flosi, and said he would need them more.

"Why," said Flosi, "should I need these more?"

"Because," said Skarphedinn, "thou art the sweetheart of the Swinefell's goblin, if, as men say, he does indeed turn thee into a woman every ninth night."

Then Flosi spurned the money, and said he would not touch a penny of it, and then he said he would only have one of two things: either that Hauskuld should fall unatoned, or they would have vengeance for him.

Then Flosi would neither give nor take peace, and he said to the sons of Sigfus—

"Go we now home; one fate shall befall us all."

Then they went home to their booth, and Hall said—

"Here most unlucky men have a share in this suit."

Njal and his sons went home to their booth, and Njal said—

"Now comes to pass what my heart told me long ago, that this suit would fall heavy on us."

"Not so," says Skarphedinn; "they can never pursue us by the laws of the land."

"Then that will happen," says Njal, "which will be worse for all of us."

Those men who had given the money spoke about it, and said that they should take it back; but Gudmund the powerful said—

"That shame I will never choose for myself, to take back what I have given away, either here or elsewhere."

"That is well spoken," they said; and then no one would take it back.

Then Snorri the priest said, "My counsel is, that Gizur the white and Hjallti Skeggi's son keep the money till the next Althing; my heart tells me that no long time will pass ere there may be need to touch this money."

Hjallti took half the money and kept it safe, but Gizur took the rest.

Then men went home to their booths.

CHAPTER CXXIII.

AN ATTACK PLANNED ON NJAL AND HIS SONS.

FLOSI summoned all his men up to the "Great Rift," and went thither himself.

So when all his men were come, there were one hundred and twenty of them.

Then Flosi spake thus to the sons of Sigfus—

"In what way shall I stand by you in this quarrel, which will be most to your minds?"

"Nothing will please us," said Gunnar Lambi's son, "until those brothers, Njal's sons, are all slain."

"This," said Flosi, "will I promise to you, ye sons of Sigfus, not to part from this quarrel before one of us bites the dust before the other. I will also know whether there be any man here who will not stand by us in this quarrel."

But they all said they would stand by him.

Then Flosi said—

"Come now all to me, and swear an oath that no man will shrink from this quarrel."

Then all went up to Flosi and swore oaths to him; and then Flosi said—

"We will all of us shake hands on this, that he shall have forfeited life and land who quits this quarrel ere it be over."

These were the chiefs who were with Flosi:—Kol the son of Thorstein broadpaunch, the brother's son of Hall of the Side, Hroald Auzur's son from Broadwater, Auzur son of Aunund wallet-back, Thorstein the fair

the son of Gerleif, Glum Hildir's son, Modolf Kettle's son, Thorir the son of Thord Illugi's son of Mauratongue, Kolbein and Egil Flosi's kinsmen, Kettle Sigfus' son, and Mord his brother, Ingiald of the Springs, Thorkel and Lambi, Grani Gunnar's son, Gunnar Lambi's son, and Sigmund Sigfus' son, and Hroar from Hromundstede.

Then Flosi said to the sons of Sigfus—

"Choose ye now a leader, whomsoever ye think best fitted; for some one man must needs be chief over the quarrel."

Then Kettle of the Mark answered—

"If the choice is to be left with us brothers, then we will soon choose that this duty should fall on thee; there are many things which lead to this. Thou art a man of great birth, and a mighty chief, stout of heart, and strong of body, and wise withal, and so we think it best that thou shouldst see to all that is needful in the quarrel."

"It is most fitting," said Flosi, "that I should agree to undertake this as your prayer asks; and now I will lay down the course which we shall follow, and my counsel is, that each man ride home from the Thing and look after his household during the summer, so long as men's haymaking lasts. I, too, will ride home, and be at home this summer; but when that Lord's day comes on which

winter is eight weeks off, then I will let them sing me a mass at home, and afterwards ride west across Loomnips Sand; each of our men shall have two horses. I will not swell our company beyond those which have now taken the oath, for we have enough and to spare if all keep true tryst. I will ride all the Lord's day and the night as well, but at even on the second day of the week, I shall ride up to Threecorner ridge about mid-even. There shall ye then be all come who have sworn an oath in this matter. But if there be any one who has not come, and who has joined us in this quarrel, then that man shall lose nothing save his life, if we may have our way."

"How does that hang together," said Kettle, "that thou canst ride from home on the Lord's day, and come the second day of the week to Threecorner ridge?"

"I will ride," said Flosi, "up from Skaptartongue, and north of the Eyjafell Jokul, and so down into Goda-land, and it may be done if I ride fast. And now I will tell you my whole purpose, that when we meet there all together, we shall ride to Bergthorsknoll with all our band, and fall on Njal's sons with fire and sword, and not turn away before they are all dead. Ye shall hide this plan, for our lives lie on it. And now we will take to our horses and ride home."

Then they all went to their booths.

After that Flosi made them saddle his horses, and they waited for no man, and rode home.

Flosi would not stay to meet Hall his father-in-law, for he knew of a surety that Hall would set his face against all strong deeds.

Njal rode home from the Thing and his sons. They were at home that summer. Njal asked Kari his son-in-law whether he thought at all of riding east to Dyrholms to his own house.

"I will not ride east," answered Kari, "for one fate shall befall me and thy sons."

Njal thanked him, and said that was only what was likely from him. There were nearly thirty fighting men in Njal's house, reckoning the house-carles.

One day it happened that Rodny Hauskuld's daughter, the mother of Hauskuld Njal's son, came to the Springs. Her brother Ingialld greeted her well, but she would not take his greeting, but yet bade him go out with her. Ingialld did so, and went out with her; and so they walked away from the farm-yard both together. Then she clutched hold of him and they both sat down, and Rodny said—

"Is it true that thou hast sworn an oath to fall on Njal, and slay him and his sons?"

"True it is," said he.

"A very great dastard art thou," she says, "thou, whom Njal hath thrice saved from outlawry."

"Still it hath come to this," says Ingialld, "that my life lies on it if I do not this?"

"Not so," says she, "thou shalt live all the same, and be called a better man, if thou betrayest not him to whom thou oughtest to behave best."

Then she took a linen hood out of her bag, it was clotted with blood all over, and torn and tattered, and said, "This hood, Hauskuld Njal's son, and thy sister's son, had on his head when they slew him; methinks, then, it is ill doing to stand by those from whom this mischief sprang."

"Well!" answers Ingialld, "so it shall be that I will not be against Njal whatever follows after, but still I know that they will turn and throw trouble on me."

"Now mightest thou," said Rodny, "yield Njal and his sons great help, if thou tellest him all these plans."

"That I will not do," says Ingialld, "for then I am every man's dastard, if I tell what was trusted to me in good faith; but it is a manly deed to sunder myself from this quarrel when I know that there is a sure looking for of vengeance; but tell Njal and his sons to beware of

themselves all this summer, for that will be good counsel, and to keep many men about them."

Then she fared to Bergthorsknoll, and told Njal all this talk; and Njal thanked her, and said she had done well, "for there would be more wickedness in his falling on me than of all men else."

She fared home, but he told this to his sons.

There was a carline at Bergthorsknoll, whose name was Saevuna. She was wise in many things, and foresighted; but she was then very old, and Njal's sons called her an old dotard, when she talked so much, but still some things which she said came to pass. It fell one day that she took a cudgel in her hand, and went up above the house to a stack of vetches. She beat the stack of vetches with her cudgel, and wished it might never thrive, "wretch that it was!"

Skarphedinn laughed at her, and asked why she was so angry with the vetch stack.

"This stack of vetches," said the carline, "will be taken and lighted with fire when Njal my master is burnt, house and all, and Bergthora my foster-child. Take it away to the water, or burn it up as quick as you can."

"We will not do that," says Skarphedinn, "for something else will be got to light a fire with, if that were foredoomed, though this stack were not here."

The carline babbled the whole summer about the vetch-stack that it should be got indoors, but something always hindered it.

CHAPTER CXXIV.

OF PORTENTS.

At Reykium on Skeid dwelt one Runolf Thorstein's son. His son's name was Hildiglum. He went out on the night of the Lord's day, when nine weeks were still to winter; he heard a great crash, so that he thought both heaven and earth shook. Then he looked into the west "airt," and he thought he saw thereabouts a ring of fiery hue, and within the ring a man on a gray horse. He passed quickly by him, and rode hard. He had a flaming firebrand in his hand, and he rode so close to him that he could see him plainly. He was as black as pitch, and he sung this song with a mighty voice—

"Here I ride swift steed,
His flank flecked with rime,
Rain from his mane drips,
Horse mighty for harm;
Flames flare at each end,
Gall glows in the midst,

So fares it with Flosi's redes
As this flaming brand flies;
And so fares it with Flosi's redes
As this flaming brand flies."

Then he thought he hurled the firebrand east towards the fells before him, and such a blaze of fire leapt up to meet it that he could not see the fells for the blaze. It seemed as though that man rode east among the flames and vanished there.

After that he went to his bed, and was senseless a long time, but at last he came to himself. He bore in mind all that had happened, and told his father, but he bade him tell it to Hjallti Skeggi's son. So he went and told Hjallti, but he said he had seen "'the Wolf's ride,' and that comes ever before great tidings."

CHAPTER CXXV.

FLOSI'S JOURNEY FROM HOME.

FLOSI busked him from the east when two months were still to winter, and summoned to him all his men who had promised him help and company. Each of them had two horses and good weapons, and they all came to Swinefell, and were there that night.

Flosi made them say prayers betimes on the Lord's

day, and afterwards they sate down to meat. He spoke to his household, and told them what work each was to do while he was away. After that he went to his horses.

Flosi and his men rode first west on the Sand.* Flosi bade them not to ride too hard at first; but said they would do well enough at that pace, and he bade all to wait for the others if any of them had need to stop. They rode west to Woodcombe, and came to Kirkby. Flosi there bade all men to come into the church, and pray to God, and men did so.

After that they mounted their horses, and rode on the fell, and so to Fishwaters, and rode a little to the west of the lakes, and so struck down west on to the Sand.† Then they left Eyjafell Jokul on their left hand, and so came down into Godaland, and so on to Markfleet, and came about nones‡ on the second day of the week to Three-corner ridge, and waited till mid-even. Then all had came thither save Ingialld of the Springs.

The sons of Sigfus spoke much ill of him, but Flosi bade them not blame Ingialld when he was not by, "but we will pay him for this hereafter."

* "Sand," Skeidará sand. † "Sand," Mælifell's sand.

‡ "Nones," the well-known canonical hour of the day, the ninth hour from six A.M., that is, about three o'clock P.M., when one of the church services took place.

CHAPTER CXXVI.

OF PORTENTS AT BERGTHORSKNOLL.

Now we must take up the story, and turn to Bergthorsknoll, and say that Grim and Helgi go to Holar. They had children out at foster there, and they told their mother that they should not come home that evening. They were in Holar all the day, and there came some poor women and said they had come from far. Those brothers asked them for tidings, and they said they had no tidings to tell, "but still we might tell you one bit of news."

They asked what that might be, and bade them not hide it. They said so it should be.

"We came down out of Fleetlithe, and we saw all the sons of Sigfus riding fully armed—they made for Three-corner ridge, and were fifteen in company. We saw too. Grani Gunnar's son and Gunnar Lambi's son, and they were five in all. They took the same road, and one may say now that the whole country-side is faring and flitting about."

"Then," said Helgi Njal's son, "Flosi must have come from the east, and they must have all gone to

meet him, and we two, Grim, should be where Skarphedinn is."

Grim said so it ought to be, and they fared home.

That same evening Bergthora spoke to her household, and said, "Now shall ye choose your meat to-night, so that each may have what he likes best; for this evening is the last that I shall set meat before my household."

"That shall not be," they said.

"It will be though," she says, "and I could tell you much more if I would, but this shall be a token, that Grim and Helgi will be home ere men have eaten their full to-night; and if this turns out so, then the rest that I say will happen too."

After that she set meat on the board, and Njal said, "Wondrously now it seems to me. Methinks I see all round the room, and it seems as though the gable wall were thrown down, but the whole board and the meat on it is one gore of blood."

All thought this strange but Skarphedinn, he bade men not be downcast, nor to utter other unseemly sounds, so that men might make a story out of them.

"For it befits us surely more than other men to bear us well, and it is only what is looked for from us."

Grim and Helgi came home ere the board was

cleared, and men were much struck at that. Njal asked why they had returned so quickly, but they told what they had heard.

Njal bade no man go to sleep, but to beware of themselves.

CHAPTER CXXVII.

THE ONSLAUGHT* ON BERGTHORSKNOLL.

Now Flosi speaks to his men—

"Now we will ride to Bergthorsknoll, and come thither before supper-time."

They do so. There was a dell in the knoll, and they rode thither, and tethered their horses there, and stayed there till the evening was far spent.

Then Flosi said, "Now we will go straight up to the house, and keep close, and walk slow, and see what counsel they will take."

Njal stood out of doors, and his sons, and Kari and all the serving-men, and they stood in array to meet them in the yard, and they were near thirty of them.

Flosi halted and said—"Now we shall see what counsel they take, for it seems to me, if they stand out

* The Icelandic word is "heimsókn," a term which still lingers in the grave offence known in Scottish Law as "hamesucken."

of doors to meet us, as though we should never get the mastery over them."

"Then is our journey bad," says Grani Gunnar's son, "if we are not to dare to fall on them."

"Nor shall that be," says Flosi; "for we will fall on them though they stand out of doors; but we shall pay that penalty, that many will not go away to tell which side won the day."

Njal said to his men, "See ye now what a great band of men they have."

"They have both a great and well-knit band," says Skarphedinn; "but this is why they make a halt now, because they think it will be a hard struggle to master us."

"That cannot be why they halt," says Njal; "and my will is that our men go indoors, for they had hard work to master Gunnar of Lithend, though he was alone to meet them; but here is a strong house as there was there, and they will be slow to come to close quarters."

"This is not to be settled in that wise," says Skarphedinn, "for those chiefs fell on Gunnar's house, who were so noble-minded, that they would rather turn back than burn him, house and all; but these will fall on us at once with fire, if they cannot get at us in any other way, for they will leave no stone unturned to get the

better of us; and no doubt they think, as is not unlikely, that it will be their deaths if we escape out of their hands. Besides, I am unwilling to let myself be stifled indoors like a fox in his earth."

"Now," said Njal, "as often it happens, my sons, ye set my counsel at naught, and shew me no honour, but when ye were younger ye did not so, and then your plans were better furthered."

"Let us do," said Helgi, "as our father wills; that will be best for us."

"I am not so sure of that," says Skarphedinn, "for now he is 'fey;' but still I may well humour my father in this, by being burnt indoors along with him, for I am not afraid of my death."

Then he said to Kari, "Let us stand by one another well, brother-in-law, so that neither parts from the other."

"That I have made up my mind to do," says Kari; "but if it should be otherwise doomed,—well! then it must be as it must be, and I shall not be able to fight against it."

"Avenge us, and we will avenge thee," says Skarphedinn, "if we live after thee."

Kari said so it should be.

Then they all went in, and stood in array at the door.

"Now are they all 'fey,'" said Flosi, "since they have gone indoors, and we will go right up to them as quickly as we can, and throng as close as we can before the door, and give heed that none of them, neither Kari nor Njal's sons, get away; for that were our bane."

So Flosi and his men came up to the house, and set men to watch round the house, if there were any secret doors in it. But Flosi went up to the front of the house with his men.

Then Hroald Auzur's son ran up to where Skarphedinn stood, and thrust at him. Skarphedinn hewed the spearhead off the shaft as he held it, and made another stroke at him, and the axe fell on the top of the shield, and dashed back the whole shield on Hroald's body, but the upper horn of the axe caught him on the brow, and he fell at full length on his back, and was dead at once.

"Little chance had that one with thee, Skarphedinn," said Kari, "and thou art our boldest."

"I'm not so sure of that," says Skarphedinn, and he drew up his lips and smiled.

Kari, and Grim, and Helgi, threw out many spears, and wounded many men; but Flosi and his men could do nothing."

At last Flosi said, "We have already gotten great

manscathe in our men; many are wounded, and he slain whom we would choose last of all. It is now clear that we shall never master them with weapons; many now there be who are not so forward in fight as they boasted, and yet they were those who goaded us on most. I say this most to Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, who were the least willing to spare their foes. But still we shall have to take to some other plan for ourselves, and now there are but two choices left, and neither of them good. One is to turn away, and that is our death; the other, to set fire to the house, and burn them inside it; and that is a deed which we shall have to answer for heavily before God, since we are Christian men ourselves; but still we must take to that counsel."

CHAPTER CXXVIII.

NJAL'S BURNING.

Now they took fire, and made a great pile before the doors. Then Skarphedinn said—

"What, lads! are ye lighting a fire, or are ye taking to cooking?"

"So it shall be," answered Grani Gunnar's son; "and thou shalt not need to be better done."

"Thou repayest me," said Skarphedinn, "as one may look for from the man that thou art. I avenged thy father, and thou settest most store by that duty which is farthest from thee."

Then the women threw whey on the fire, and quenched it as fast as they lit it. Some, too, brought water, or slops.

Then Kol Thorstein's son said to Flosi—

"A plan comes into my mind; I have seen a loft over the hall among the crosstrees, and we will put the fire in there, and light it with the vetch-stack that stands just above the house."

Then they took the vetch-stack and set fire to it, and they who were inside were not aware of it till the whole hall was a-blaze over their heads.

Then Flosi and his men made a great pile before each of the doors, and then the women folk who were inside began to weep and to wail.

Njal spoke to them and said, "Keep up your hearts, nor utter shrieks, for this is but a passing storm, and it will be long before ye have another such; and put your faith in God, and believe that he is so merciful that he will not let us burn both in this world and the next."

Such words of comfort had he for them all, and others still more strong.

Now the whole house began to blaze. Then Njal went to the door and said—

"Is Flosi so near that he can hear my voice."

Flosi said that he could hear it.

"Wilt thou," said Njal, "take an atonement from my sons, or allow any men to go out."

"I will not," answers Flosi, "take any atonement from thy sons, and now our dealings shall come to an end once for all, and I will not stir from this spot till they are all dead; but I will allow the women and children and house-carles to go out."

Then Njal went into the house, and said to the folk—

"Now all those must go out to whom leave is given, and so go thou out Thorhalla Asgrim's daughter, and all the people also with thee who may."

Then Thorhalla said—

"This is another parting between me and Helgi than I thought of a while ago; but still I will egg on my father and brothers to avenge this manscathe which is wrought here."

"Go, and good go with thee," said Njal, "for thou art a brave woman."

After that she went out and much folk with her.

Then Astrid of Deepback said to Helgi Njal's son—

"Come thou out with me, and I will throw a woman's cloak over thee, and tire thy head with a kerchief."

He spoke against it at first, but at last he did so at the prayer of others.

So Astrid wrapped the kerchief round Helgi's head, but Thorhilda, Skarphedinn's wife, threw the cloak over him, and he went out between them, and then Thorgerda Njal's daughter, and Helga her sister, and many other folk went out too.

But when Helgi came out Flosi said—

"That is a tall woman and broad across the shoulders that went yonder, take her and hold her."

But when Helgi heard that, he cast away the cloak. He had got his sword under his arm, and hewed at a man, and the blow fell on his shield and cut off the point of it, and the man's leg as well. Then Flosi came up and hewed at Helgi's neck, and took off his head at a stroke.

Then Flosi went to the door and called out to Njal, and said he would speak with him and Bergthora.

Now Njal does so, and Flosi said—

"I will offer thee, master Njal, leave to go out, for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors."

"I will not go out," said Njal, "for I am an old man, and little fitted to avenge my sons, but I will not live in shame."

Then Flosi said to Bergthora—

"Come thou out, housewife, for I will for no sake burn thee indoors."

"I was given away to Njal young," said Bergthora, "and I have promised him this, that we would both share the same fate."

After that they both went back into the house.

"What counsel shall we now take," said Bergthora.

"We will go to our bed," says Njal, "and lay us down; I have long been eager for rest."

Then she said to the boy Thord, Kari's son—

"Thee will I take out, and thou shalt not burn in here."

"Thou hast promised me this, grandmother," says the boy, "that we should never part so long as I wished to be with thee; but methinks it is much better to die with thee and Njal than to live after you."

Then she bore the boy to her bed, and Njal spoke to his steward and said—

"Now shalt thou see where we lay us down, and how I lay us out, for I mean not to stir an inch hence, whether reek or burning smart me, and so thou wilt be able to guess where to look for our bones."

He said he would do so.

There had been an ox slaughtered and the hide lay

there. Njal told the steward to spread the hide over them, and he did so.

So there they lay down both of them in their bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the cross, and gave over their souls into God's hand, and that was the last word that men heard them utter.

Then the steward took the hide and spread it over them, and went out afterwards. Kettle of the Mark caught hold of him, and dragged him out, he asked carefully after his father-in-law Njal, but the steward told him the whole truth. Then Kettle said—

"Great grief hath been sent on us, when we have had to share such ill-luck together."

Skarphedinn saw how his father laid him down, and how he laid himself out, and then he said—

"Our father goes early to bed, and that is what was to be looked for, for he is an old man."

Then Skarphedinn, and Kari, and Grim, caught the brands as fast as they dropped down, and hurled them out at them, and so it went on a while. Then they hurled spears in at them, but they caught them all as they flew, and sent them back again.

Then Flosi bade them cease shooting, "for all feats

of arms will go hard with us when we deal with them; ye may well wait till the fire overcomes them."

So they do that, and shoot no more.

Then the great beams out of the roof began to fall, and Skarphedinn said—

"Now must my father be dead, and I have neither heard groan nor cough from him."

Then they went to the end of the hall, and there had fallen down a cross-beam inside which was much burnt in the middle.

Kari spoke to Skarphedinn, and said—"Leap thou out here, and I will help thee to do so, and I will leap out after thee, and then we shall both get away if we set about it so, for hitherward blows all the smoke."

"Thou shalt leap first," said Skarphedinn; "but I will leap straightway on thy heels."

"That is not wise," says Kari, "for I can get out well enough elsewhere, though it does not come about here."

"I will not do that," says Skarphedinn; "leap thou out first, but I will leap after thee at once."

"It is bidden to every man," says Kari, "to seek to save his life while he has a choice, and I will do so now; but still this parting of ours will be in such wise that we shall never see one another more; for if I leap out

of the fire, I shall have no mind to leap back into the fire to thee, and then each of us will have to fare his own way."

"It joys me, brother-in-law," says Skarphedinn, "to think that if thou gettest away thou wilt avenge me."

Then Kari took up a blazing bench in his hand, and runs up along the cross-beam, then he hurls the bench out at the roof, and it fell among those who were outside.

Then they ran away, and by that time all Kari's upper clothing and his hair were a-blaze, then he threw himself down from the roof, and so crept along with the smoke.

Then one man said who was nearest—

"Was that a man that leapt out at the roof?"

"Far from it," says another; "more likely it was Skarphedinn who hurled a firebrand at us."

After that they had no more mistrust.

Kari ran till he came to a stream, and then he threw himself down into it, and so quenched the fire on him.

After that he ran along under shelter of the smoke into a hollow, and rested him there, and that has since been called Kari's Hollow.

CHAPTER CXXIX.

SKARPHEDINN'S DEATH.

Now it is to be told of Skarphedinn that he runs out on the cross-beam straight after Kari, but when he came to where the beam was most burnt, then it broke down under him. Skarphedinn came down on his feet, and tried again the second time, and climbs up the wall with a run, then down on him came the wall-plate, and he toppled down again inside.

Then Skarphedinn said—"Now one can see what will come;" and then he went along the side wall. Gunnar Lambi's son leapt up on the wall and sees Skarphedinn, he spoke thus—

"Weepest thou now, Skarphedinn?"

"Not so," says Skarphedinn; "but true it is that the smoke makes one's eyes smart, but is it as it seems to me, dost thou laugh?"

"So it is surely," says Gunnar, "and I have never laughed since thou slewest Thrain on Markfleet."

Then Skarphedinn said—"Here now is a keepsake for thee;" and with that he took out of his purse the jaw-tooth which he had hewn out of Thrain, and threw

it at Gunnar, and struck him in the eye, so that it started out and lay on his cheek.

Then Gunnar fell down from the roof.

Skarphedinn then went to his brother Grim, and they held one another by the hand and trode the fire; but when they came to the middle of the hall Grim fell down dead.

Then Skarphedinn went to the end of the house, and then there was a great crash, and down fell the roof. Skarphedinn was then shut in between it and the gable, and so he could not stir a step thence.

Flosi and his band stayed by the fire until it was broad daylight; then came a man riding up to them. Flosi asked him for his name, but he said his name was Geirmund, and that he was a kinsman of the sons of Sigfus.

"Ye have done a mighty deed," he says.

"Men," said Flosi, "will call it both a mighty deed and an ill deed, but that can't be helped now."

"How many men have lost their lives here?" asks Geirmund.

"Here have died," says Flosi, "Njal and Bergthora and all their sons, Thord Kari's son, Kari Solmund's son, but besides these we cannot say for a surety, because we know not their names."

"Thou tellest him now dead," said Geirmund, "with whom we have gossipped this morning."

"Who is that?" says Flosi.

"We two," says Geirmund, "I and my neighbour Bard, met Kari Solmund's son, and Bard gave him his horse, and his hair and his upper clothes were burned off him?"

"Had he any weapons?" asks Flosi.

"He had the sword 'Life-luller,'" says Geirmund, "and one edge of it was blue with fire, and Bard and I said that it must have become soft, but he answered thus, that he would harden it in the blood of the sons of Sigfus or the other Burners."

"What said he of Skarphedinn?" said Flosi.

"He said both he and Grim were alive," answers Geirmund, "when they parted; but he said that now they must be dead."

"Thou hast told us a tale," said Flosi, "which bodes us no idle peace, for that man hath now got away who comes next to Gunnar of Lithend in all things; and now, ye sons of Sigfus, and ye other Burners, know this, that such a great blood feud, and hue and cry will be made about this burning, that it will make many a man headless, but some will lose all their goods. Now I doubt much whether any man of you, ye sons of Sigfus,

will dare to stay in his house; and that is not to be wondered at; and so I will bid you all to come and stay with me in the east, and let us all share one fate."

They thanked him for his offer, and said they would be glad to take it.

Then Modolf Kettle's son, sang a song.

"But one prop of Njal's house liveth,
All the rest inside are burnt,
All but one,—those bounteous spenders,
Sigfus' stalwart sons wrought this;
Son of Gollnir* now is glutted
Vengeance for brave Hauskuld's death,
Brisk flew fire through thy dwelling,
Bright flames blazed above thy roof."

"We shall have to boast of something else than that Njal has been burnt in his house," says Flosi, "for there is no glory in that."

Then he went up on the gable, and Glum Hilldir's son, and some other men. Then Glum said, "Is Skarphedinn dead, indeed?" But the others said he must have been dead long ago.

The fire sometimes blazed up fitfully and sometimes burned low, and then they heard down in the fire beneath them that this song was sung—

* "Son of Gollnir," Njal, who was the son of Thorgeir Gelling or Gollnir. See ch. xx.

"Deep, I ween, ye Ogre offspring!
Devilish brood of giant birth,
Would ye groan with gloomy visage
Had the fight gone to my mind;
But my very soul it gladdens
That my friends* who now boast high,
Wrought not this foul deed, their glory,
Save with footsteps filled with gore."

"Can Skarphedinn, think ye, have sung this song dead or alive?" said Grani Gunnar's son.

"I will go into no guesses about that," says Flosi.

"We will look for Skarphedinn," says Grani, "and the other men who have been here burnt inside the house."

"That shall not be," says Flosi, "it is just like such foolish men as thou art, now that men will be gathering force all over the country; and when they do come, I trow the very same man who now lingers will be so scared that he will not know which way to run; and now my counsel is that we all ride away as quickly as ever we can."

Then Flosi went hastily to his horse and all his men.

Then Flosi said to Geirmund—

"Is Ingialld, thinkest thou, at home at the Springs."

Geirmund said he thought he must be at home.

* "My friends," ironically of course.

"There now is a man," says Flosi, "who has broken his oath with us and all good faith."

Then Flosi said to the sons of Sigfus—"What course will ye now take with Ingialld; will ye forgive him, or shall we now fall on him and slay him?"

They all answered that they would rather fall on him and slay him.

Then Flosi jumped on his horse, and all the others, and they rode away. Flosi rode first, and shaped his course for Rangriver, and up along the river bank.

Then he saw a man riding down on the other bank of the river and he knew that there was Ingialld of the Springs. Flosi calls out to him. Ingialld halted and turned down to the river bank; and Flosi said to him—

"Thou hast broken faith with us, and hast forfeited life and goods. Here now are the sons of Sigfus, who are eager to slay thee; but methinks thou hast fallen into a strait, and I will give thee thy life if thou will hand over to me the right to make my own award."

"I will sooner ride to meet Kari," said Ingialld, "than grant thee the right to utter thine own award, and my answer to the sons of Sigfus is this, that I

shall be no whit more afraid of them than they are of me."

"Bide thou there," says Flosi, "if thou art not a coward, for I will send thee a gift."

"I will bide of a surety," says Ingialld.

Thorstein Kolbein's son, Flosi's brother's son, rode up by his side and had a spear in his hand, he was one of the bravest of men, and the most worthy of those who were with Flosi.

Flosi snatched the spear from him, and launched it at Ingialld, and it fell on his left side, and passed through the shield just below the handle, and clove it all asunder, but the spear passed on into his thigh just above the knee-pan, and so on into the saddle-tree, and there stood fast.

Then Flosi said to Ingialld—

"Did it touch thee?"

"It touched me sure enough," says Ingialld, "but I call this a scratch and not a wound."

Then Ingialld plucked the spear out of the wound, and said to Flosi—

"Now bide thou, if thou art not a milksop."

Then he launched the spear back over the river. Flosi sees that the spear is coming straight for his middle, and then he backs his horse out of the way,

but the spear flew in front of Flosi's horse, and missed him, but it struck Thorstein's middle, and down he fell at once dead off his horse.

Now Ingialld runs for the wood, and they could not get at him.

Then Flosi said to his men—

"Now have we gotten manscathe, and now we may know, when such things befall us, into what a luckless state we have got. Now it is my counsel that we ride up to Threecorner ridge; thence we shall be able to see where men ride all over the country, for by this time they will have gathered together a great band, and they will think that we have ridden east to Fleetlithe from Threecorner ridge; and thence they will think that we are riding north up on the fell, and so east to our own country, and thither the greater part of the folk will ride after us; but some will ride the coast road east to Selialandsmull, and yet they will think there is less hope of finding us thitherward, but I will now take counsel for all of us, and my plan is to ride up into Threecorner-fell, and bide there till three suns have risen and set in heaven."

CHAPTER CXXX.

OF KARI SOLMUND'S SON.

Now it is to be told of Kari Solmund's son that he fared away from that hollow in which he had rested himself until he met Bard, and those words passed between them which Geirmund had told.

Thence Kari rode to Mord, and told him the tidings, and he was greatly grieved.

Kari said there were other things more befitting a man than to weep for them dead, and bade him rather gather folk and come to Holtford.

After that he rode into Thurso-dale to Hjallti Skeggi's son, and as he went along Thurso water, he sees a man riding fast behind him. Kari waited for the man, and knows that he was Ingialld of the Springs. He sees that he is very bloody about the thigh; and Kari asked Ingialld who had wounded him, and he told him.

"Where met ye two?" says Kari.

"By Rangwater side," says Ingialld, "and he threw a spear over at me."

"Didst thou aught for it?" asks Kari.

"I threw the spear back," says Ingialld, "and they said that it met a man, and he was dead at once."

"Knowest thou not," said Kari, "who the man was?"

"Methought he was like Thorstein Flosi's brother's son," says Ingialld.

"Good luck go with thy hand," says Kari.

After that they rode both together to see Hjallti Skeggi's son, and told him the tidings. He took these deeds ill, and said there was the greatest need to ride after them and slay them all.

After that he gathered men and roused the whole country; now he and Kari and Ingialld ride with this band to meet Mord Valgard's son, and they found him at Holtford, and Mord was there waiting for them with a very great company. Then they parted the hue and cry; some fared the straight road by the east coast to Selialandsmull, but some went up to Fleetlithe, and other-some the higher road thence to Threecorner ridge, and so down into Godaland. Thence they rode north to Sand. Some too rode as far as Fishwaters, and there turned back. Some the coast road east to Holt, and told Thorgeir the tidings, and asked whether they had not ridden by there.

"This is how it is," said Thorgeir, "though I am not

a mighty chief, yet Flosi would take other counsel than to ride under my eyes, when he has slain Njal, my father's brother, and my cousins; and there is nothing left for any of you but e'en to turn back again, for ye should have hunted longer nearer home; but tell this to Kari, that he must ride hither to me and be here with me if he will; but though he will not come hither east, still I will look after his farm at Dyrholms if he will, but tell him too that I will stand by him and ride with him to the Althing. And he shall also know this, that we brothers are the next of kin to follow up the feud, and we mean so to take up the suit, that outlawry shall follow and after that revenge, man for man, if we can bring it about; but I do not go with you now, because I know naught will come of it, and they will now be as wary as they can of themselves."

Now they ride back, and all met at Hof and talked there among themselves, and said that they had gotten disgrace since they had not found them. Mord said that was not so. Then many men were eager that they should fare to Fleetlithe, and pull down the homesteads of all those who had been at those deeds, but still they listened for Mord's utterance.

"That," he said, "would be the greatest folly." They asked why he said that.

"Because," he said, "if their houses stand, they will be sure to visit them to see their wives; and then, as time rolls on, we may hunt them down there; and now ye shall none of you doubt that I will be true to thee Kari, and to all of you, and in all counsel, for I have to answer for myself."

Hjallti bade him do as he said. Then Hjallti bade Kari to come and stay with him, he said he would ride thither first. They told him what Thorgeir had offered him, and he said he would make use of that offer afterwards, but said his heart told him it would be well if there were many such.

After that the whole band broke up.

Flosi and his men saw all these tidings from where they were on the fell; and Flosi said—

"Now we will take our horses and ride away, for now it will be some good."

The sons of Sigfus asked whether it would be worth while to get to their homes and tell the news.

"It must be Mord's meaning," says Flosi, "that ye will visit your wives; and my guess is, that his plan is to let your houses stand unsacked; but my plan is that not a man shall part from the other, but all ride east with me."

So every man took that counsel, and then they all

rode east and north of the Jǫkul, and so on till they came to Swinefell.

Flosi sent at once men out to get in stores, so that nothing might fall short.

Flosi never spoke about the deed, but no fear was found in him, and he was at home the whole winter till Yule was over.

CHAPTER CXXXI.

NJAL'S AND BERGTHORA'S BONES FOUND.

KARI bade Hjallti to go and search for Njal's bones, "for all will believe in what thou sayest and thinkest about them."

Hjallti said he would be most willing to bear Njal's bones to church; so they rode thence fifteen men. They rode east over Thurso-water, and called on men there to come with them till they had one hundred men, reckoning Njal's neighbours.

They came to Bergthorsknoll at mid-day.

Hjallti asked Kari under what part of the house Njal might be lying, but Kari shewed them to the spot, and there was a great heap of ashes to dig away. There they found the hide underneath, and it was as though it

were shrivelled with the fire. They raised up the hide, and lo! they were unburnt under it. All praised God for that, and thought it was a great token.

Then the boy was taken up who had lain between them, and of him a finger was burnt off which he had stretched out from under the hide.

Njal was borne out, and so was Bergthora, and then all men went to see their bodies.

Then Hjallti said—"What like look to you these bodies?"

They answered, "We will wait for thy utterance."

Then Hjallti said, "I shall speak what I say with all freedom of speech. The body of Bergthora looks as it was likely she would look, and still fair; but Njal's body and visage seem to me so bright that I have never seen any dead man's body so bright as this."

They all said they thought so too.

Then they sought for Skarphedinn, and the men of the household shewed them to the spot where Flosi and his men heard the song sung, and there the roof had fallen down by the gable, and there Hjallti said that they should look. Then they did so, and found Skarphedinn's body there, and he had stood up hard by the gable-wall, and his legs were burnt off him right

up to the knees, but all the rest of him was unburnt. He had bitten through his under lip, his eyes were wide open and not swollen nor starting out of his head; he had driven his axe into the gable-wall so hard that it had gone in up to the middle of the blade, and that was why it was not softened.

After that the axe was broken out of the wall, and Hjallti took up the axe, and said—

"This is a rare weapon, and few would be able to wield it."

"I see a man," said Kari, "who shall bear the axe."

"Who is that?" says Hjallti.

"Thorgeir Craggeir," says Kari, "he whom I now think to be the greatest man in all their family."

Then Skarphedinn was stripped of his clothes, for they were unburnt, he had laid his hands in a cross, and the right hand uppermost. They found marks on him; one between his shoulders and the other on his chest, and both were branded in the shape of a cross, and men thought that he must have burnt them in himself.

All men said that they thought that it was better to be near Skarphedinn dead than they weened, for no man was afraid of him.

They sought for the bones of Grim, and found them in the midst of the hall. They found, too, there, right

over-against him under the side wall, Thord Freedmanson; but in the weaving-room they found Saevuna the carline, and three men more. In all they found there the bones of nine souls. Now they carried the bodies to the church, and then Hjallti rode home and Kari with him. A swelling came on Ingialld's leg, and then he fared to Hjallti, and was healed there, but still he limped ever afterwards.

Kari rode to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. By that time Thorhalla was come home, and she had already told the tidings. Asgrim took Kari by both hands, and bade him be there all that year. Kari said so it should be.

Asgrim asked besides all the folk who had been in the house at Bergthorsknoll to stay with him. Kari said that was well offered, and said he would take it on their behalf.

Then all the folk were flitted thither.

Thorhall Asgrim's son was so startled when he was told that his foster-father Njal was dead, and that he had been burnt in his house, that he swelled all over, and a stream of blood burst out of both his ears, and could not be staunched, and he fell into a swoon, and then it was staunched.

After that he stood up, and said he had behaved like

a coward, "but I would that I might be able to avenge this which has befallen me on some of those who burnt him."

But when others said that no one would think this a shame to him, he said he could not stop the mouths of the people from talking about it.

Asgrim asked Kari what trust and help he thought he might look for from those east of the rivers. Kari said that Mord Valgard's son, and Hjallti Skeggi's son, would yield him all the help they could, and so, too, would Thorgeir Craggeir, and all those brothers.

Asgrim said that was great strength.

"What strength shall we have from thee?" says Kari.

"All that I can give," says Asgrim, "and I will lay down my life on it."

"So do," says Kari.

"I have also," says Asgrim, "brought Gizur the White into the suit, and have asked his advice how we shall set about it."

"What advice did he give?" asks Kari.

"He counselled," answers Asgrim, "'that we should hold us quite still till spring, but then ride east and set the suit on foot against Flosi for the manslaughter of Helgi, and summon the neighbours from their homes,

and give due notice at the 'Thing of the suits for the Burning, and summon the same neighbours there too on the inquest before the court. I asked Gizur who should plead the suit for manslaughter, but he said that Mord should plead it whether he liked it or not, and now," he went on, "it shall fall most heavily on him that up to this time all the suits he has undertaken have had the worst ending. Kari shall also be wroth whenever he meets Mord, and so, if he be made to fear on one side, and has to look to me on the other, then he will undertake the duty.'"

Then Kari said, "We will follow thy counsel as long as we can, and thou shalt lead us."

It is to be told of Kari that he could not sleep of nights. Asgrim woke up one night and heard that Kari was awake, and Asgrim said—"Is it that thou canst not sleep at night?"

Then Kari sang this song—

"Bender of the bow of battle,
Sleep will not my eyelids seal,
Still my murdered messmates' bidding
Haunts my mind the livelong night;
Since the men their brands abusing
Burned last autumn guileless Njal,
Burned him house and home together,
Mindful am I of my hurt."

Kari spoke of no men so often as of Njal and Skarphedinn, and Bergthora and Helgi. He never abused his foes, and never threatened them.

CHAPTER CXXXII.

FLOSI'S DREAM.

ONE night it so happened that Flosi struggled much in his sleep. Glum Hilldir's son woke him up, and then Flosi said—

"Call me Kettle of the Mark."

Kettle came thither, and Flosi said, "I will tell thee my dream."

"I am ready to hear it," says Kettle.

"I dreamt," says Flosi, "that methought I stood below Loom-nip, and went out and looked up to the Nip, and all at once it opened, and a man came out of the Nip, and he was clad in goatskins, and had an iron staff in his hand. He called, as he walked, on many of my men, some sooner and some later, and named them by name. First he called Grim the Red my kinsman, and Arni Kol's son. Then methought something strange followed, methought he called Eyjolf Bolverk's son, and Ljot son of Hall of the Side, and some six men more.

Then he held his peace awhile. After that he called five men of our band, and among them were the sons of Sigfus, thy brothers; then he called other six men, and among them were Lambi, and Modolf, and Glum. Then he called three men. Last of all he called Gunnar Lambi's son, and Kol Thorstein's son. After that he came up to me; I asked him 'what news.' He said he had tidings enough to tell. Then I asked him for his name, but he called himself Irongrim. I asked him whither he was going; he said he had to fare to the Althing. 'What shalt thou do there?' I said. 'First I shall challenge the inquest,' he answers, 'and then the courts, then clear the field for fighters.' After that he sang this song—

"Soon a man death's snake-strokes dealing
High shall lift his head on earth,
Here amid the dust low rolling
Battered brainpans men shall see;
Now upon the hills in hurly
Buds the blue steel's harvest bright;
Soon the bloody dew of battle
Thigh-deep through the ranks shall rise."

Then he shouted with such a mighty shout that methought everything near shook, and dashed down his staff, and there was a mighty crash. Then he went

back into the fell, but fear clung to me; and now I wish thee to tell me what thou thinkest this dream is."

"It is my foreboding," says Kettle, "that all those who were called must be 'fey.' It seems to me good counsel that we tell this dream to no man just now."

Flosi said so it should be. Now the winter passes away till Yule was over. Then Flosi said to his men—

"Now I mean that we should fare from home, for methinks we shall not be able to have an idle peace. Now we shall fare to pray for help, and now that will come true which I told you, that we should have to bow the knee to many ere this quarrel were ended."

CHAPTER CXXXIII.

OF FLOSI'S JOURNEY AND HIS ASKING FOR HELP.

After that they busked them from home all together. Flosi was in long-hose because he meant to go on foot, and then he knew that it would seem less hard to the others to walk.

Then they fared from home to Knappvale, but the evening after to Broadwater, and then to Calffell, thence by Bjornness to Hornfirth, thence to Staffell in Lon, and then to Thvattwater to Hall of the Side.

Flosi had to wife Steinvora, his daughter.

Hall gave them a very hearty welcome, and Flosi said to Hall—

"I will ask thee, father-in-law, that thou wouldst ride to the Thing with me with all thy Thingmen."

"Now," answered Hall, "it has turned out as the saw says, 'but a short while is hand fain of blow;' and yet it is one and the same man in thy band who now hangs his head, and who then goaded thee on to the worst of deeds when it was still undone. But my help I am bound to lend thee in all such places as I may."

"What counsel dost thou give me," said Flosi, "in the strait in which I now am."

"Thou shalt fare," said Hall, "north, right up to Weaponfirth, and ask all the chiefs for aid, and thou wilt yet need it all before the Thing is over."

Flosi stayed there three nights, and rested him, and fared thence east to Geitahellna, and so to Berufirth; there they were the night. Thence they fared east to Broaddale in Haydale. There Hallbjorn the strong dwelt. He had to wife Oddny the sister of Saurli Broddhelgi's son, and Flosi had a hearty welcome there.

Hallbjorn asked how far north among the firths Flosi meant to go. He said he meant to go as far as Weapon-

firth. Then Flosi took a purse of money from his belt, and said he would give it to Hallbjorn. He took the money, but yet said he had no claim on Flosi for gifts, but still I would be glad to know in what thou wilt that I repay thee."

"I have no need of money," says Flosi, "but I wish thou wouldst ride to the Thing with me, and stand by me in my quarrel, but still I have no ties or kinship to tell towards thee."

"I will grant thee that," said Hallbjorn, "to ride to the Thing with thee, and to stand by thee in thy quarrel as I would by my brother."

Flosi thanked him, and Hallbjorn asked much about the Burning, but they told him all about it at length.

Thence Flosi fared to Broaddale's heath, and so to Hrafnkelstede, there dwelt Hrafnkell, the son of Thorir, the son of Hrafnkell Raum. Flosi had a hearty welcome there, and sought for help and a promise to ride to the Thing from Hrafnkell, but he stood out a long while, though the end of it was that he gave his word that his son Thorir should ride with all their Thingmen, and yield him such help as the other priests of the same district.

Flosi thanked him and fared away to Bersastede. There Holmstein son of Bersi the wise dwelt, and he

gave Flosi a very hearty welcome. Flosi begged him for help. Holmstein said he had been long in his debt for help.

Thence they fared to Waltheofstede—there Saurli Broddhelgi's son, Bjarni's brother, dwelt. He had to wife Thordisa, a daughter of Gudmund the powerful, of Modruvale. They had a hearty welcome there. But next morning Flosi raised the question with Saurli that he should ride to the Althing with him, and bid him money for it.

"I cannot tell about that," says Saurli, "so long as I do not know on which side my father-in-law Gudmund the powerful stands, for I mean to stand by him on whichever side he stands."

"Oh!" said Flosi, "I see by thy answer that a woman rules in this house."

Then Flosi stood up and bade his men take their upper clothing and weapons, and then they fared away, and got no help there. So they fared below Lagarfleet and over the heath to Njardwick; there two brothers dwelt, Thorkel the allwise, and Thorwalld his brother; they were sons of Kettle, the son of Thidrandi the wise, the son of Kettle rumble, son of Thorir Thidrandi. The mother of Thorkel the allwise and Thorwalld was Yngvillda, daughter of Thorkel the wise. Flosi

got a hearty welcome there, he told those brothers plainly of his errand, and asked for their help; but they put him off until he gave three marks of silver to each of them for their aid; then they agreed to stand by Flosi.

Their mother Yngvilda was by when they gave their words to ride to the Althing, and wept. Thorkel asked why she wept; and she answered—

"I dreamt that thy brother Thorwalld was clad in a red kirtle, and methought it was so tight as though it were sewn on him; methought too that he wore red hose on his legs and feet, and bad shoethongs were twisted round them; methought it ill to see when I knew he was so uncomfortable, but I could do naught for him."

They laughed and told her she had lost her wits, and said her babble should not stand in the way of their ride to the Thing.

Flosi thanked them kindly, and fared thence to Weaponfirth and came to Hof. There dwelt Bjarni Broddhelgi's son.* Bjarni took Flosi by both hands, and Flosi bade Bjarni money for his help.

"Never," said Bjarni, "have I sold my manhood or

* Broddhelgi was the son of Thorgil, the son of Thorstein the white, the son of Oliver, the son of Eyvalld, the son of Oxen-Thorir. The mother of Bjarni was Halla, the daughter of

help for bribes, but now that thou art in need of help, I will do thee a good turn for friendship's sake, and ride to the Thing with thee, and stand by thee as I would by my brother."

"Then thou hast thrown a great load of debt on my hands," said Flosi, "but still I looked for as much from thee."

Thence Flosi and his men fared to Crosswick. Thorkel Geitis' son was a great friend of his. Flosi told him his errand, and Thorkel said it was but his duty to stand by him in every way in his power, and not to part from his quarrel. Thorkel gave Flosi good gifts at parting.

Thence they fared north to Weaponfirth and up into the Fleetdale country, and turned in as guests at Holmstein's, the son of Bersi the wise. Flosi told him that all had backed him in his need and business well, save Saurli Broddhelgi's son. Holmstein said the reason of that was that he was not a man of strife. Holmstein gave Flosi good gifts.

Lyting. The mother of Broddhelgi was Asvora, the daughter of Thorir, the son of Porridge-Atli, the son of Thorir Thidrandi. Bjarni Broddhelgi's son had to wife Rannveiga the daughter of Thorgeir, the son of Eric of Gooddale, the son of Geirmund, the son of Hroald, the son of Eric Frizzlebeard.

Flosi fared up Fleetdale, and thence south on the fell across Oxenlava and down Swinehorndale, and so out by Alftafirth to the west, and did not stop till he came to Thvattwater to his father-in-law Hall's house. There he stayed half a month, and his men with him and rested him.

Flosi asked Hall what counsel he would now give him, and what he should do next, and whether he should change his plans.

"My counsel," said Hall, "is this, that thou goest home to thy house, and the sons of Sigfus with thee, but that they send men to set their homesteads in order. But first of all fare home, and when ye ride to the Thing, ride all together, and do not scatter your band. Then let the sons of Sigfus go to see their wives on the way. I too will ride to the Thing, and Ljot my son with all our Thing-men, and stand by thee with such force as I can gather to me."

Flosi thanked him, and Hall gave him good gifts at parting.

Then Flosi went away from Thvattwater, and nothing is to be told of his journey till he comes home to Swinefell. There he stayed at home the rest of the winter, and all the summer right up to the Thing.

CHAPTER CXXXIV.

OF THORHALL AND KARI.

THORHALL Asgrim's son, and Kari Solmund's son, rode one day to Mossfell to see Gizur the white; he took them with both hands, and there they were at his house a very long while. Once it happened as they and Gizur talked of Njal's burning, that Gizur said it was very great luck that Kari had got away. Then a song came into Kari's mouth.

"I who whetted helmet-hewer,*
I who oft have burnished brand,
From the fray went all unwilling
When Njal's rooftree crackling roared;
Out I leapt when bands of spearmen
Lighted there a blaze of flame!
Listen men unto my moaning,
Mark the telling of my grief."

Then Gizur said—"It must be forgiven thee that thou art mindful, and so we will talk no more about it just now."

Kari says that he will ride home; and Gizur said "I will now make a clean breast of my counsel to thee.

* "Helmet-hewer," sword.

Thou shalt not ride home, but still thou shalt ride away, and east under Eyjafell, to see Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorleif crow. They shall ride from the east with thee. They are the next of kin in the suit, and with them shall ride Thorgrim the big, their brother. Ye shall ride to Mord Valgard's son's house, and tell him this message from me, that he shall take up the suit for manslaughter for Helgi Njal's son against Flosi. But if he utters any words against this, then shalt thou make thyself most wrathful, and make believe as though thou wouldst let thy axe fall on his head; and in the second place, thou shalt assure him of my wrath if he shews any ill will. Along with that shalt thou say, that I will send and fetch away my daughter Thorkatla, and make her come home to me; but that he will not abide, for he loves her as the very eyes in his head."

Kari thanked him for his counsel. Kari spoke nothing of help to him, for he thought he would shew himself his good friend in this as in other things.

Thence Kari rode east over the rivers, and so to Fleetlithe, and east across Markfleet, and so on to Selialandsmull. So they ride east to Holt.

Thorgeir welcomed them with the greatest kindliness. He told them of Flosi's journey, and how great help he had got in the east firths.

Kari said it was no wonder that he, who had to answer for so much, should ask for help for himself.

Then Thorgeir said, "the better things go for them, the worse it shall be for them; we will only follow them up so much the harder."

Kari told Thorgeir of Gizur's advice. After that they ride from the east to Rangrivervale to Mord Valgard's son's house. He gave them a hearty welcome. Kari told him the message of Gizur his father-in-law. He was slow to take the duty on him, and said it was harder to go to law with Flosi than with any other ten men.

"Thou behavest now as he* thought," said Kari; "for thou art a bad bargain in every way; thou art both a coward and heartless, but the end of this shall be as is fitting, that Thorkatla shall fare home to her father."

She busked her at once, and said she had long been "boun" to part from Mord. Then he changed his mood and his words quickly, and begged off their wrath, and took the suit upon him at once.

"Now," said Kari, "thou hast taken the suit upon thee, see that thou pleadest it without fear, for thy life lies on it."

* Gizur.

Mord said he would lay his whole heart on it to do this well and manfully.

After that Mord summoned to him nine neighbours, —they were all near neighbours to the spot where the deed was done. Then Mord took Thorgeir by the hand and named two witnesses to bear witness, "that Thorgeir Thorir's son hands me over a suit for manslaughter against Flosi Thord's son, to plead it for the slaying of Helgi Njal's son, with all those proofs which have to follow the suit. Thou handest over to me this suit to plead and to settle, and to enjoy all rights in it, as though I were the rightful next of kin. Thou handest it over to me by law, and I take it from thee by law."

A second time Mord named his witnesses, "to bear witness," said he, "that I give notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, for that he dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound; and from which Helgi got his death. I give notice of this before five witnesses"—here he named them all by name—"I give this lawful notice. I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Again he named witnesses to "bear witness that I give notice of a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound against Flosi Thord's son, for that wound which proved

a death wound, but Helgi got his death therefrom on such and such a spot, when Flosi Thord's son first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I give notice of this before five neighbours"—then he named them all by name—"I give this lawful notice. I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then Mord named his witnesses again "to bear witness," said he "that I summon these nine neighbours who dwell nearest the spot"—here he named them all by name—"to ride to the Althing, and to sit on the inquest to find whether Flosi Thord's son rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I call on you to utter all those words which ye are bound to find by law, and which I shall call on you to utter before the court, and which belong to this suit; I call upon you by a lawful summons—I call on you so that ye may yourselves hear—I call on you in the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Again Mord named his witnesses "to bear witness, that I summon these nine neighbours who dwell nearest to the spot to ride to the Althing, and to sit on an inquest

to find whether Flosi Thord's son wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or body, or marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Helgi got his death, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I call on you to utter all those words which ye are bound to find by law, and which I shall call on you to utter before the court, and which belong to this suit. I call upon you by a lawful summons—I call on you so that ye may yourselves hear—I call on you in the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then Mord said—

"Now is the suit set on foot as ye asked, and now I will pray thee, Thorgeir Craggeir, to come to me when thou ridest to the Thing, and then let us both ride together, each with our band, and keep as close as we can together, for my band shall be ready by the very beginning of the Thing, and I will be true to you in all things."

They shewed themselves well pleased at that, and this was fast bound by oaths, that no man should sunder himself from another till Kari willed it, and that each of them should lay down his life for the other's life. Now they parted with friendship, and settled to meet again at the Thing.

Now Thorgeir rides back east, but Kari rides west over the rivers till he came to Tongue, to Asgrim's house. He welcomed them wonderfully well, and Kari told Asgrim all Gizur the white's plan, and of the setting on foot of the suit.

"I looked for as much from him," says Asgrim, "that he would behave well, and now he has shewn it."

Then Asgrim went on—

"What heardest thou from the east of Flosi?"

"He went east all the way to Weaponfirth," answers Kari, "and nearly all the chiefs have promised to ride with him to the Althing, and to help him. They look, too, for help from thee Reykdalesmen, and the men of Lightwater, and the Axefirthers."

Then they talked much about it, and so the time passes away up to the Althing.

Thorhall Asgrim's son took such a hurt in his leg that the foot above the ankle was as big and swollen as a woman's thigh, and he could not walk save with a staff. He was a man tall in growth, and strong and powerful, dark of hue in hair and skin, measured and guarded in his speech, and yet hot and hasty tempered. He was the third greatest lawyer in all Iceland.

Now the time comes that men should ride from home to the Thing, Asgrim said to Kari—

"Thou shalt ride at the very beginning of the Thing, and fit up our booths, and my son Thorhall with thee. Thou wilt treat him best and kindest, as he is footlame, but we shall stand in the greatest need of him at this Thing. With you two, twenty men more shall ride."

After that they made ready for their journey, and then they rode to the Thing, and set up their booths, and fitted them out well.

CHAPTER CXXXV.

OF FLOSI AND THE BURNERS.

FLOSI rode from the east and those hundred and twenty men who had been at the Burning with him. They rode till they came to Fleetlithe. Then the sons of Sigfus looked after their homesteads and tarried there that day, but at even they rode west over Thurso-water, and slept there that night. But next morning early they saddled their horses and rode off on their way.

Then Flosi said to his men—

"Now will we ride to Tongue to Asgrim to breakfast, and trample down his pride a little."

They said that were well done. They rode till they had a short way to Tongue. Asgrim stood out of doors,

and some men with him. They see the band as soon as ever they could do so from the house. Then Asgrim's men said—

"There must be Thorgeir Craggeir."

"Not he," said Asgrim. "I think so all the more because these men fare with laughter and wantonness; but such kinsmen of Njal as Thorgeir is would not smile before some vengeance is taken for the Burning, and I will make another guess, and maybe ye will think that unlikely. My meaning is, that it must be Flosi and the Burners with him, and they must mean to humble us with insults, and we will now go indoors all of us."

Now they do so, and Asgrim made them sweep the house and put up the hangings, and set the boards and put meat on them. He made them place stools along each bench, all down the room.

Flosi rode into the "town," and bade men alight from their horses and go in. They did so, and Flosi and his men went into the hall. Asgrim sate on the cross-bench on the dais. Flosi looked at the benches and saw that all was made ready that men needed to have. Asgrim gave them no greeting, but said to Flosi—

"The boards are set, so that meat may be free to those that need it."

Flosi sat down to the board, and all his men; but they laid their arms up against the wainscot. They sat on the stools who found no room on the benches; but four men stood with weapons just before where Flosi sat while they ate.

Asgrim kept his peace during the meat, but was as red to look on as blood.

But when they were full, some women cleared away the boards, while others brought in water to wash their hands. Flosi was in no greater hurry than if he had been at home. There lay a pole-axe in the corner of the dais. Asgrim caught it up with both hands, and ran up to the rail at the edge of the dais, and made a blow at Flosi's head. Glum Hilldir's son happened to see what he was about to do, and sprang up at once, and got hold of the axe above Asgrim's hands, and turned the edge at once on Asgrim; for Glum was very strong. Then many more men ran up and seized Asgrim, but Flosi said that no man was to do Asgrim any harm, "for we put him to too hard a trial, and he only did what he ought, and shewed in that that he had a big heart."

Then Flosi said to Asgrim, "Here, now, we shall part safe and sound, and meet at the Thing, and there begin our quarrel over again.

"So it will be," says Asgrim; "and I would wish that, ere this Thing be over, ye should have to take in some of your sails."

Flosi answered him never a word, and then they went out, and mounted their horses, and rode away. They rode till they came to Laugarwater, and were there that night; but next morning they rode on to Baitvale, and baited their horses there, and there many bands rode to meet them. There was Hall of the Side, and all the Eastfirthers. Flosi greeted them well, and told them of his journeys and dealings with Asgrim. Many praised him for that, and said such things were bravely done.

Then Hall said, "I look on this in another way than ye do, for methinks it was a foolish prank; they were sure to bear in mind their griefs, even though they were not reminded of them anew; but those men who try others so heavily must look for all evil."

It was seen from Hall's way that he thought this deed far too strong. They rode thence all together, till they came to the Upper Field, and there they set their men in array, and rode down on the Thing.

Flosi had made them fit out Byrgir's booth ere he rode to the Thing; but the Eastfirthers rode to their own booths.

CHAPTER CXXXVI.

OF THORGEIR CRAGGEIR.

THORGEIR CRAGGEIR rode from the east with much people. His brothers were with him, Thorleif crow and Thorgrim the big. They came to Hof, to Mord Valgard's son's house, and bided there till he was ready. Mord had gathered every man who could bear arms, and they could see nothing about him but that he was most steadfast in everything, and now they rode until they came west across the rivers. Then they waited for Hjallti Skeggi's son. He came after they had waited a short while, and they greeted him well, and rode afterwards all together till they came to Reykia in Bishop's-tongue, and bided there for Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and he came to meet them there. Then they rode west across Bridgewater. Then Asgrim told them all that had passed between him and Flosi; and Thorgeir said—

"I would that we might try their bravery ere the Thing closes."

They rode until they came to Baitvale. There Gizur the white came to meet them with a very great company, and they fell to talking together. Then they

rode to the Upper Field, and drew up all their men in array there, and so rode to the Thing.

Flosi and his men all took to their arms, and it was within an ace that they would fall to blows. But Asgrim and his friends and their followers would have no hand in it, and rode to their booths; and now all was quiet that day, so that they had naught to do with one another. Thither were come chiefs from all the Quarters of the land; there had never been such a crowded Thing before, that men could call to mind.

CHAPTER CXXXVII.

OF EYJOLF BOLVERK'S SON.

THERE was a man named Eyjolf. He was the son of Bolverk, the son of Eyjolf the guileful, of Otterdale.* Eyjolf was a man of great rank, and best skilled in law of all men, so that some said he was the third best lawyer in Iceland. He was the fairest in face of all men, tall and strong, and there was the making of a

* Eyjolf the guileful was the son of Thord Gellir, the son of Oleif Feilan. The mother of Eyjolf the guileful was Rodny, the daughter of Skeggi of Midfirth.

great chief in him. He was greedy of money, like the rest of his kinsfolk.

One day Flosi went to the booth of Bjarni Brodd-helgi's son. Bjarni took him by both hands, and sat Flosi down by his side. They talked about many things, and at last Flosi said to Bjarni—

'What counsel shall we now take?"

'I think," answered Bjarni, "that it is now hard to say what to do, but the wisest thing seems to me to go round and ask for help, since they are drawing strength together against you. I will also ask thee, Flosi, whether there be any very good lawyer in your band; for now there are but two courses left; one to ask if they will take an atonement, and that is not a bad choice, but the other is to defend the suit at law, if there be any defence to it, though that will seem to be a bold course; and this is why I think this last ought to be chosen, because ye have hitherto fared high and mightily, and it is unseemly now to take a lower course."

"As to thy asking about lawyers," said Flosi, "I will answer thee at once that there is no such man in our band; nor do I know where to look for one except it be Thorkel Geitir's son, thy kinsman."

"We must not reckon on him," said Bjarni, "for though he knows something of law, he is far too wary,

and no man need hope to have him as his shield; but he will back thee as well as any man who backs thee best, for he has a stout heart; besides, I must tell thee that it will be that man's bane who undertakes the defence in this suit for the Burning, but I have no mind that this should befall my kinsman Thorkel, so ye must turn your eyes elsewhither."

Flosi said he knew nothing about who were the best lawyers.

"There is a man named Eyjolf," said Bjarni; "he is Bolverk's son, and he is the best lawyer in the West-firther's Quarter; but you will need to give him much money if you are to bring him into the suit, but still we must not stop at that. We must also go with our arms to all law business, and be most wary of ourselves, but not meddle with them before we are forced to fight for our lives. And now I will go with thee, and set out at once on our begging for help, for now methinks the peace will be kept but a little while longer."

After that they go out of the booth, and to the booths of the Axefirthers. Then Bjarni talks with Lyting and Bleing, and Hroi Arnstein's son, and he got speedily whatever he asked of them. Then they fared to see Kol, the son of Killing-Skuti, and Eyvind Thorkel's son, the son of Askel the priest, and asked them for their

help; but they stood out a long while, but the end of it was that they took three marks of silver for it, and so went into the suit with them.

Then they went to the booths of the men of Lightwater, and stayed there some time. Flosi begged the men of Lightwater for help, but they were stubborn and hard to win over, and then Flosi said, with much wrath, "Ye are ill-behaved! ye are grasping and wrongful at home in your own country, and ye will not help men at the Thing, though they need it. No doubt you will be held up to reproach at the Thing, and very great blame will be laid on you if ye bear not in mind that scorn and those biting words which Skarphedinn hurled at you men of Lightwater."

But on the other hand, Flosi dealt secretly with them, and bade them money for their help, and so coaxed them over with fair words, until it came about that they promised him their aid, and then became so steadfast that they said they would fight for Flosi, if need were.

Then Bjarni said to Flosi,

"Well done! well done! Thou art a mighty chief, and a bold outspoken man, and reckest little what thou sayest to men."

After that they fared away west across the river, and

so to the Hladbooth. They saw many men outside before the booth. There was one man who had a scarlet cloak over his shoulders, and a gold band round his head, and an axe studded with silver in his hand.

"This is just right," said Bjarni, "here now is the man I spoke of, Eyjolf Bolverk's son, if thou wilt see him, Flosi."

Then they went to meet Eyjolf, and hailed him. Eyjolf knew Bjarni at once, and greeted him well. Bjarni took Eyjolf by the hand, and led him up into the "Great Rift." Flosi's and Bjarni's men followed after, and Eyjolf's men went also with him. They bade them stay upon the lower brink of the Rift, and look about them, but Flosi, and Bjarni, and Eyjolf went on till they came to where the path leads down from the upper brink of the Rift.

Flosi said it was a good spot to sit down there, for they could see around them far and wide. Then they sat them down there. They were four of them together, and no more.

Then Bjarni spoke to Eyjolf, and said—

"Thee, friend, have we come to see, for we much need thy help in every way."

"Now," said Eyjolf, "there is good choice of men here at the Thing, and ye will not find it hard to fall on

those who will be a much greater strength to you than I can be."

"Not so," said Bjarni, "thou hast many things which shew that there is no greater man than thou at the Thing; first of all, that thou art so well-born, as all those men are who are sprung from Ragnar hairybreeks; thy forefathers, too, have always stood first in great suits, both here at the Thing, and at home in their own country, and they have always had the best of it; we think, therefore, it is likely that thou wilt be lucky in winning suits, like thy kinsfolk."

"Thou speakest well, Bjarni," said Eyjolf; "but I think that I have small share in all this that thou sayest."

Then Flosi said—

"There is no need beating about the bush as to what we have in mind. We wish to ask for thy help, Eyjolf, and that thou wilt stand by us in our suits, and go to the court with us, and undertake the defence, if there be any, and plead it for us, and stand by us in all things that may happen at this Thing."

Eyjolf jumped up in wrath, and said that no man had any right to think that he could make a catspaw of him, or drag him on if he had no mind to go himself.

"I see, too, now," he says, "what has led you to

utter all those fair words with which ye began to speak to me."

Then Hallbjorn the strong caught hold of him and sate him down by his side, between him and Bjarni, and said—

"No tree falls at the first stroke, friend, but sit here awhile by us."

Then Flosi drew a gold ring off his arm.

"This ring will I give thee," Eyjolf, for thy help and friendship, and so shew thee that I will not befool thee. It will be best for thee to take the ring, for there is no man here at the Thing to whom I have ever given such a gift."

The ring was such a good one, and so well made, that it was worth twelve hundred yards of russet stuff.

Hallbjorn drew the ring on Eyjolf's arm; and Eyjolf said—

"It is now most fitting that I should take the ring, since thou behavest so handsomely; and now thou mayest make up thy mind that I will undertake the defence, and do all things needful."

"Now," said Bjarni, "ye behave handsomely on both sides, and here are men well fitted to be witnesses, since I and Hallbjorn are here, that thou hast undertaken the suit."

Then Eyjolf arose, and Flosi too, and they took one another by the hand; and so Eyjolf undertook the whole defence of the suit off Flosi's hands, and so, too, if any suit arose out of the defence, for it often happens that what is a defence in one suit, is a plaintiff's plea in another. So he took upon him all the proofs and proceedings which belonged to those suits, whether they were to be pleaded before the Quarter Court or the Fifth Court. Flosi handed them over in lawful form, and Eyjolf took them in lawful form, and then he said to Flosi and Bjarni.

"Now I have undertaken this defence just as ye asked, but my wish it is that ye should still keep it secret at first; but if the matter comes into the Fifth Court, then be most careful not to say that ye have given goods for my help."

Then Flosi went home to his booth, and Bjarni with him, but Eyjolf went to the booth of Snorri the priest, and sate down by him, and they talked much together.

Snorri the priest caught hold of Eyjolf's arm, and turned up the sleeve, and sees that he had a great ring of gold on his arm. Then Snorri the priest said—

"Pray, was this ring bought or given?"

Eyjolf was put out about it, and had never a word to say. Then Snorri said—

"I see plainly that thou must have taken it as a gift, and may this ring not be thy death!"

Eyjolf jumped up and went away, and would not speak about it; and Snorri said, as Eyjolf arose—

"It is very likely that thou wilt know what kind of gift thou hast taken by the time this Thing is ended."

Then Eyjolf went to his booth.

CHAPTER CXXXVIII.

OF ASGRIM, AND GIZUR, AND KARI.

Now Asgrim Ellidagrim's son talks to Gizur the white, and Kari Solmund's son, and to Hjallti Skeggi's son, Mord Valgard's son, and Thorgeir Craggeir, and says—

"There is no need to have any secrets here, for only those men are by who know all our counsel. Now I will ask you if ye know anything of their plans, for if you do, it seems to me that we must take fresh counsel about our own plans."

"Snorri the priest," answers Gizur the white, "sent a man to me, and bade him tell me that Flosi had gotten great help from the Northlanders; but that Eyjolf Bolverk's son, his kinsman, had had a gold ring given him by some one, and made a secret of it, and Snorri said it

was his meaning that Eyjolf Bolverk's son must be meant to defend the suit at law, and that the ring must have been given him for that."

They were all agreed that it must be so. Then Gizur spoke to them—

"Now has Mord Valgard's son, my son-in-law, undertaken a suit, which all must think most hard, to prosecute Flosi; and now my wish is that ye share the other suits amongst you, for now it will soon be time to give notice of the suits at the Hill of Laws. We shall need also to ask for more help."

Asgrim said so it should be, "but we will beg thee to go round with us when we ask for help." Gizur said he would be ready to do that.

After that Gizur picked out all the wisest men of their company to go with him as his backers. There was Hjallti Skeggi's son, and Asgrim, and Kari, and Thorgeir Craggeir.

Then Gizur the white said—

"Now will we first go to the booth of Skapti Thorod's son," and they do so. Gizur the white went first, then Hjallti, then Kari, then Asgrim, then Thorgeir Craggeir, and then his brothers.

They went into the booth. Skapti sat on the cross bench on the dais, and when he saw Gizur the white

he rose up to meet him, and greeted him and all of them well, and bade Gizur to sit down by him, and he does so. Then Gizur said to Asgrim—

"Now shalt thou first raise the question of help with Skapti, but I will throw in what I think good."

"We are come hither," said Asgrim, "for this sake, Skapti, to seek help and aid at thy hand."

"I was thought to be hard to win the last time," said Skapti, "when I would not take the burden of your trouble on me."

"It is quite another matter now," said Gizur. "Now the feud is for master Njal and mistress Bergthora, who were burnt in their own house without a cause, and for Njal's three sons, and many other worthy men, and thou wilt surely never be willing to yield no help to men, or to stand by thy kinsmen and connections."

"It was in my mind," answers Skapti, "when Skarphedinn told me that I had myself borne tar on my own head, and cut up a sod of turf and crept under it, and when he said that I had been so afraid that Thorolf Lopt's son of Eyrar bore me abroad in his ship among his meal-sacks, and so carried me to Iceland, that I would never share in the blood feud for his death."

"Now there is no need to bear such things in mind," said Gizur the white, "for he is dead who said that, and

thou wilt surely grant me this, though thou wouldst not do it for other men's sake."

"This quarrel," says Skapti, "is no business of thine, except thou choosest to be entangled in it along with them."

Then Gizur was very wrath, and said—

"Thou art unlike thy father, though he was thought not to be quite clean-handed; yet was he ever helpful to men when they needed him most."

"We are unlike in temper," said Skapti. "Ye two, Asgrim and thou, think that ye have had the lead in mighty deeds; thou, Gizur the white, because thou overcamest Gunnar of Lithend; but Asgrim, for that he slew Gauk, his foster-brother."

"Few," said Asgrim, "bring forward the better if they know the worse, but many would say that I slew not Gauk ere I was driven to it. There is some excuse for thee for not helping us, but none for heaping reproaches on us; and I only wish before this Thing is out that thou mayest get from this suit the greatest disgrace, and that there may be none to make thy shame good."

Then Gizur and his men stood up all of them, and went out, and so on to the booth of Snorri the priest.

Snorri sat on the cross-bench in his booth; they

went into the booth, and he knew the men at once, and stood up to meet them, and bade them all welcome, and made room for them to sit by him.

After that, they asked one another the news of the day.

Then Asgrim spoke to Snorri, and said—

"For that am I and my kinsman Gizur come hither, to ask thee for thy help."

"Thou speakest of what thou mayest always be forgiven for asking, for help in the blood-feud after such connections as thou hadst. We, too, got many wholesome counsels from Njal, though few now bear that in mind; but as yet I know not of what ye think ye stand most in need."

"We stand most in need," answers Asgrim, "of brisk lads and good weapons, if we fight them here at the Thing."

"True it is," said Snorri, "that much lies on that, and it is likeliest that ye will press them home with daring, and that they will defend themselves so in like wise, and neither of you will allow the others' right. Then ye will not bear with them and fall on them, and that will be the only way left; for then they will seek to pay you off with shame for manscathe, and with dishonour for loss of kin."

It was easy to see that he goaded them on in everything.

Then Gizur the white said—

"Thou speakest well, Snorri, and thou behavest ever most like a chief when most lies at stake."

"I wish to know," said Asgrim, "in what way thou wilt stand by us if things turn out as thou sayest."

"I will shew thee those marks of friendship," said Snorri, "on which all your honour will hang, but I will not go with you to the court. But if ye fight here on the Thing, do not fall on them at all unless ye are all most steadfast and dauntless, for you have great champions against you. But if ye are overmatched, ye must let yourselves be driven hither towards us, for I shall then have drawn up my men in array hereabouts, and shall be ready to stand by you. But if it falls out otherwise, and they give way before you, my meaning is that they will try to run for a stronghold in the "Great Rift." But if they come thither, then ye will never get the better of them. Now I will take that on my hands, to draw up my men there, and guard the pass to the stronghold, but we will not follow them whether they turn north or south along the river. And when you have slain out of their band about as many as I think ye will be able to pay blood-fines for, and yet keep your priest-

hoods and abodes, then I will run up with all my men and part you. Then ye shall promise to do as I bid you, and stop the battle, if I on my part do what I have now promised."

Gizur thanked him kindly, and said that what he had said was just what they all needed, and then they all went out.

"Whither shall we go now?" said Gizur.

"To the Northlanders' booth," said Asgrim.

Then they fared thither.

CHAPTER CXXXIX.

OF ASGRIM AND GUDMUND.

AND when they came into the booth then they saw where Gudmund the powerful sate and talked with Einar Conal's son, his foster-child; he was a wise man.

Then they come before him, and Gudmund welcomed them very heartily, and made them clear the booth for them, that they might all be able to sit down.

Then they asked what tidings, and Asgrim said—

"There is no need to mutter what I have to say. We wish, Gudmund, to ask for thy steadfast help."

"Have ye seen any other chiefs before?" said Gudmund.

They said they had been to see Skapti Thorod's son and Snorri the priest, and told him quietly how they had fared with each of them.

Then Gudmund said—

"Last time I behaved badly and meanly to you. Then I was stubborn, but now ye shall drive your bargain with me all the more quickly because I was more stubborn then, and now I will go myself with you to the court with all my Thing-men, and stand by you in all such things as I can, and fight for you though this be needed, and lay down my life for your lives. I will also pay Skapti out in this way, that Thorstein gape-mouth his son shall be in the battle on our side, for he will not dare to do aught else than I will, since he has Jodisa my daughter to wife, and then Skapti will try to part us."

They thanked him, and talked with him long and low afterwards, so that no other men could hear.

Then Gudmund bade them not to go before the knees of any other chiefs, for he said that would be little-hearted.

"We will now run the risk with the force that we have. Ye must go with your weapons to all law-business, but not fight as things stand."

Then they went all of them home to their booths, and all this was at first with few men's knowledge.

So now the Thing goes on.

CHAPTER CXL.

OF THE DECLARATIONS OF THE SUITS.

It was one day that men went to the Hill of Laws, and the chiefs were so placed that Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Gizur the white, and Gudmund the powerful, and Snorri the priest, were on the upper hand by the Hill of Laws; but the Eastfirthers stood down below.

Mord Valgard's son stood next to Gizur his father-in-law, he was of all men the readiest-tongued.

Gizur told him that he ought to give notice of the suit for manslaughter, and bade him speak up, so that all might hear him well.

Then Mord took witness and said—"I take witness to this that I give notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, for that he rushed at Helgi Njal's son and dealt him a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I say that in this suit he ought to be made a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not

to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I say that all his goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right by law to take his forfeited goods. I give notice of this suit for manslaughter in the Quarter Court into which this suit ought by law to come. I give notice of this lawful notice; I give notice in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws; I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son; I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then a great shout was uttered at the Hill of Laws, that Mord spoke well and boldly.

Then Mord began to speak a second time.

"I take you to witness to this," says he, "that I give notice of a suit against Flosi Thord's son. I give notice for that he wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death on that spot where Flosi Thord's son had first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I say that thou, Flosi, ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I

say that all thy goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right by law to take the goods which have been forfeited by thee. I give notice of this suit in the Quarter Court into which it ought by law to come; I give notice of this lawful notice; I give notice of it in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws; I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I give notice of the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son hath handed over to me."

After that Mord sat him down.

Flosi listened carefully, but said never a word the while.

Then Thorgeir Craggeir stood up and took witness, and said—"I take witness to this, that I give notice of a suit against Glum Hilldir's son, in that he took firing and lit it, and bore it to the house at Bergthorsknoll, when they were burned inside it, to wit, Njal Thorgeir's son, and Bergthora Skarphedinn's daughter, and all those other men who were burned inside it there and then. I say that in this suit he ought to be made a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I say that all his goods are forfeited, half to me, and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right

by law to take his forfeited goods; I give notice of this suit in the Quarter Court, into which it ought by law to come. I give notice in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws. I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Glum Hilldir's son."

Kari Solmund's son declared his suits against Kol Thorstein's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and it was the common talk of men that he spoke wondrous well.

Thorleif crow declared his suit against all the sons of Sigfus, but Thorgrim the big, his brother, against Modolf Kettle's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Hroar Hamond's son, brother of Leidolf the strong.

Asgrim Ellidagrim's son declared his suit against Leidolf and Thorstein Geirleif's son, Arni Kol's son, and Grim the red.

And they all spoke well.

After that other men gave notice of their suits, and it was far on in the day that it went on so.

Then men fared home to their booths.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son went to his booth with Flosi, they passed east around the booth and Flosi said to Eyjolf.

"See'st thou any defence in these suits."

"None," says Eyjolf.

"What counsel is now to be taken?" says Flosi.

"I will give thee a piece of advice," said Eyjolf. "Now thou shalt hand over thy priesthood to thy brother Thorgeir, but declare that thou hast joined the Thing of Askel the priest the son of Thorkettle, north away in Reykiardale; but if they do not know this, then may be that this will harm them, for they will be sure to plead their suit in the Eastfirthers' court, but they ought to plead it in the Northlanders' court, and they will overlook that, and it is a Fifth Court matter against them if they plead their suit in another court than that in which they ought, and then we will take that suit up, but not until we have no other choice left."

"May be," said Flosi, "that we shall get the worth of the ring."

"I don't know that," says Eyjolf; "but I will stand by thee at law, so that men shall say that there never was a better defence. Now, we must send for Askel, but Thorgeir shall come to thee at once, and a man with him."

A little while after Thorgeir came, and then he took on him Flosi's leadership and priesthood.

By that time Askel was come thither too, and then Flosi declared that he had joined his Thing, and this was with no man's knowledge save theirs.

Now all is quiet till the day when the courts were to go out to try suits.

CHAPTER CXLI.

NOW MEN GO TO THE COURTS.

Now the time passes away till the courts were to go out to try suits. Both sides then made them ready to go thither, and armed them. Each side put war-tokens on their helmets.

Then Thorhall Asgrim's son said—

"Walk hastily in nothing, father mine, and do everything as lawfully and rightly as ye can, but if ye fall into any strait let me know as quickly as ye can, and then I will give you counsel."

Asgrim and the others looked at him, and his face was as though it were all blood, but great teardrops gushed out of his eyes. He bade them bring him his spear, that had been a gift to him from Skarphedinn, and it was the greatest treasure.

Asgrim said as they went away—

"Our kinsman Thorhall was not easy in his mind as we left him behind in the booth, and I know not what he will be at."

Then Asgrim said again—

"Now we will go to Mord Valgard's son, and think of naught else but the suit, for there is more sport in Flosi than in very many other men."

Then Asgrim sent a man to Gizur the white, and Hjallti Skeggi's son, and Gudmund the powerful. Now they all came together, and went straight to the court of Eastfirthers. They went to the court from the south, but Flosi and all the Eastfirthers with him went to it from the north. There were also the men of Reykdale and the Axefirthers with Flosi. There, too, was Eyjolf Bolverk's son. Flosi looked at Eyjolf, and said—

"All now goes fairly, and may be that it will not be far off from thy guess."

"Keep thy peace about it," says Eyjolf, "and then we shall be sure to gain our point."

Now Mord took witness, and bade all those men who had suits of outlawry before the court to cast lots who should first plead or declare his suit, and who next, and who last; he bade them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges heard it. Then lots were cast as to the declarations, and he, Mord, drew the lot to declare his suit first.

Now Mord Valgard's son took witness the second time, and said—

"I take witness to this, that I except all mistakes in words in my pleading, whether they be too many or wrongly spoken, and I claim the right to amend all my words until I have put them into proper lawful shape. I take witness to myself of this."

Again Mord said—

"I take witness to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or any other man who has undertaken the defence made over to him by Flosi, to listen for him to my oath, and to my declaration of my suit, and to all the proofs and proceedings which I am about to bring forward against him; I bid him by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear it across the court."

Again Mord Valgard's son said—

"I take witness to this, that I take an oath on the book, a lawful oath, and I say it before God, that I will so plead this suit in the most truthful, and most just, and most lawful way, so far as I know; and that I will bring forward all my proofs in due form, and utter them faithfully so long as I am in this suit."

After that he spoke in these words—

"I have called Thorodd as my first witness, and Thorbjorn as my second; I have called them to bear witness that I gave notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, on that spot where he, Flosi Thord's son, rushed with an assault laid down

by law on Helgi Njal's son, when Flosi Thord's son wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I said that he ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need; I said that all his goods were forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he has forfeited; I gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; I gave notice of that lawful notice; I gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; I gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to me; and I had all these words in my notice which I have now used in this declaration of my suit. I now declare this suit of outlawry in this shape before the court of the Eastfirthers over the head of John, as I uttered it when I gave notice of it."

Then Mord spoke again—

"I have called Thorodd as my first witness, and Thorbjorn as my second. I have called them to bear witness that I gave notice of a suit against Flosi Thord's son for that he wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and

from which Helgi got his death. I said that he ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need; I said that all his goods were forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he has forfeited; I gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; I gave notice of that lawful notice; I gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; I gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to me; and I had all these words in my notice which I have now used in this declaration of my suit. I now declare this suit of outlawry in this shape before the court of the Eastfirthers over the head of John, as I uttered it when I gave notice of it."

Then Mord's witnesses to the notice came before the court, and spake so that one uttered their witness, but both confirmed it by their common consent in this form, "I bear witness that Mord called Thorodd as his first witness, and me as his second, and my name is Thorbjorn"—then he named his father's name—"Mord called us two as his witnesses that he gave notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son when he rushed on Helgi Njal's son, in that spot where Flosi

Thord's son dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, that proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. He said that Flosi ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured by any man; he said that all his goods were forfeited, half to himself and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he had forfeited; he gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; he gave notice of that lawful notice; he gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; he gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. He gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to him. He used all those words in his notice which he used in the declaration of his suit, and which we have used in bearing witness; we have now borne our witness rightly and lawfully, and we are agreed in bearing it; we bear this witness in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head of John,* as Mord uttered it when he gave his notice."

* John for a man, and Gudruna for a woman, were standing names in the Formularies of the Icelandic code, answering to the "M or N" in our Liturgy, or to those famous fictions of English Law, "John Doe and Richard Roe."

A second time they bore their witness of the notice before the court, and put the wounds first and the assault last, and used all the same words as before, and bore their witness in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court just as Mord uttered them when he gave his notice.

Then Mord's witnesses to the handing over of the suit went before the court, and one uttered their witness, and both confirmed it by common consent, and spoke in these words—"That those two, Mord Valgard's son and Thorgeir Thorir's son, took them to witness that Thorgeir Thorir's son handed over a suit for manslaughter to Mord Valgard's son against Flosi Thord's son for the slaying of Helgi Njal's son; he handed over to him then this suit, with all the proofs and proceedings which belonged to the suit, he handed it over to him to plead and to settle, and to make use of all rights as though he were the rightful next of kin; Thorgeir handed it over lawfully, and Mord took it lawfully."

They bore this witness of the handing over of the suit in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head of John, just as Mord or Thorgeir had called them as witnesses to prove.

They made all these witnesses swear an oath ere they bore witness, and the judges too.

Again Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness to this," said he, "that I bid those nine neighbours whom I summoned when I laid this suit against Flosi Thord's son, to take their seats west on the river-bank, and I call on the defendant to challenge this inquest, I call on him by a lawful bidding before the court so that the judges may hear."

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has the defence handed over to him, to challenge the inquest which I have caused to take their seats west on the river-bank. I bid thee by a lawful bidding before the court so that the judges may hear."

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness to this, that now are all the first steps and proofs brought forward which belong to the suit. Summons to hear my oath, oath taken, suit declared, witness borne to the notice, witness borne to the handing over of the suit, the neighbours on the inquest bidden to take their seats, and the defendant bidden to challenge the inquest. I take this witness to these steps and proofs which are now brought forward, and also to this that I shall not be thought to have left the suit though I go away from the court to look up proofs, or on other business."

Now Flosi and his men went thither where the neighbours on the inquest sate.

Then Flosi said to his men—

"The sons of Sigfus must know best whether these are the rightful neighbours to the spot who are here summoned."

Kettle of the Mark answered—

"Here is that neighbour who held Mord at the font when he was baptized, but another is his second cousin by kinship.

Then they reckoned up his kinship, and proved it with an oath.

Then Eyjolf took witness that the inquest should do nothing till it was challenged.

A second time Eyjolf took witness—

"I take witness to this," said he, "that I challenge both these men out of the inquest, and set them aside"—here he named them by name, and their fathers as well—"for this sake, that one of them is Mord's second cousin by kinship, but the other for gossipry,* for which sake it is lawful to challenge a neighbour on the inquest; ye two are for a lawful reason incapable of uttering a finding, for now a lawful challenge has overtaken you, there-

* "Gossipry," that is, because they were gossips, *God's sib*, relations by baptism.

fore I challenge and set you aside by the rightful custom of pleading at the Althing, and by the law of the land; I challenge you in the cause which Flosi Thord's son has handed over to me."

Now all the people spoke out, and said that Mord's suit had come to naught, and all were agreed in this that the defence was better than the prosecution.

Then Asgrim said to Mord—

"The day is not yet their own, though they think now that they have gained a great step; but now some one shall go to see Thorhall my son, and know what advice he gives us."

Then a trusty messenger was sent to Thorhall, and told him as plainly as he could how far the suit had gone, and how Flosi and his men thought they had brought the finding of the inquest to a dead lock.

"I will so make it out," says Thorhall, "that this shall not cause you to lose the suit; and tell them not to believe it, though quirks and quibbles be brought against them, for that wiseacre Eyjolf has now overlooked something. But now thou shalt go back as quickly as thou canst, and say that Mord Valgard's son must go before the court, and take witness that their challenge has come to naught," and then he told him step by step how they must proceed.

The messenger came and told them Thorhall's advice.

Then Mord Valgard's son went to the court and took witness. "I take witness to this," said he, "that I make Eyjolf's challenge void and of none effect; and my ground is, that he challenged them not for their kinship to the true plaintiff, the next of kin, but for their kinship to him who pleaded the suit; I take this witness to myself, and to all those to whom this witness will be of use."

After that he brought that witness before the court.

Now he went whither the neighbours sate on the inquest, and bade those to sit down again who had risen up, and said they were rightly called on to share in the finding of the inquest.

Then all said that Thorhall had done great things, and all thought the prosecution better than the defence.

Then Flosi said to Eyjolf—"Thinkest thou that this is good law?"

"I think so, surely," he says, "and beyond a doubt we overlooked this; but still we will have another trial of strength with them."

Then Eyjolf took witness. "I take witness to this," said he, "that I challenge these two men out of the inquest,"—here he named them both,—"for that sake that they are lodgers, but not householders; I do not allow

you two to sit on the inquest, for now a lawful challenge has overtaken you; I challenge you both and set you aside out of the inquest, by the rightful custom of the Althing and by the law of the land."

Now Eyjolf said he was much mistaken if that could be shaken; and then all said that the defence was better than the prosecution.

Now all men praised Eyjolf, and said there was never a man who could cope with him in lawcraft.

Mord Valgard's son and Asgrim Ellidagrim's son now sent a man to Thorhall to tell him how things stood; but when Thorhall heard that, he asked what goods they owned, or if they were paupers?

The messenger said that one gained his livelihood by keeping milch-kine, and "he has both cows and ewes at his abode; but the other has a third of the land which he and the freeholder farm, and finds his own food; and they have one hearth between them, he and the man who lets the land, and one shepherd."

Then Thorhall said—

"They will fare now as before, for they must have made a mistake, and I will soon upset their challenge, and this though Eyjolf had used such big words that it was law."

Now Thorhall told the messenger plainly, step by

step, how they must proceed; and the messenger came back and told Mord and Asgrim all the counsel that Thorhall had given.

Then Mord went to the court and took witness. "I take witness to this, that I bring to naught Eyjolf Bolverk's son's challenge, for that he has challenged those men out of the inquest who have a lawful right to be there; every man has a right to sit on an inquest of neighbours, who owns three hundreds in land or more, though he may have no dairy-stock; and he too has the same right who lives by dairy-stock worth the same sum, though he leases no land."

Then he brought this witness before the court, and then he went whither the neighbours on the inquest were, and bade them sit down, and said they were rightfully among the inquest.

Then there was a great shout and cry, and then all men said that Flosi's and Eyjolf's cause was much shaken, and now men were of one mind as to this, that the prosecution was better than the defence.

Then Flosi said to Eyjolf—

"Can this be law?"

Eyjolf said he had not wisdom enough to know that for a surety, and then they sent a man to Skapti, the Speaker of the Law, to ask whether it were good

law, and he sent them back word that it was surely good law, though few knew it.

Then this was told to Flosi, and Eyjolf Bolverk's son asked the sons of Sigfus as to the other neighbours who were summoned thither.

They said there were four of them who were wrongly summoned; "for those sit now at home who were nearer neighbours to the spot."

Then Eyjolf took witness that he challenged all those four men out of the inquest, and that he did it with lawful form of challenge. After that he said to the neighbours—

"Ye are bound to render lawful justice to both sides, and now ye shall go before the court when ye are called, and take witness that ye find that bar to uttering your finding; that ye are but five summoned to utter your finding, but that ye ought to be nine; and now Thorhall may prove and carry his point in every suit, if he can cure this flaw in this suit."

And now it was plain in everything that Flosi and Eyjolf were very boastful; and there was a great cry that now the suit for the Burning was quashed, and that again the defence was better than the prosecution.

Then Asgrim spoke to Mord—

"They know not yet of what to boast ere we have

seen my son Thorhall. Njal told me that he had so taught Thorhall law, that he would turn out the best lawyer in Iceland whenever it were put to the proof."

Then a man was sent to Thorhall to tell him how things stood, and of Flosi's and Eyjolf's boasting, and the cry of the people that the suit for the Burning was quashed in Mord's hands.

"It will be well for them," says Thorhall, "if they get not disgrace from this. Thou shalt go and tell Mord to take witness, and swear an oath, that the greater part of the inquest is rightly summoned, and then he shall bring that witness before the court, and then he may set the prosecution on its feet again; but he will have to pay a fine of three marks for every man that he has wrongly summoned; but he may not be prosecuted for that at this Thing; and now thou shalt go back."

He does so, and told Mord and Asgrim all, word for word, that Thorhall had said.

Then Mord went to the court, and took witness, and swore an oath that the greater part of the inquest was rightly summoned, and said then that he had set the prosecution on its feet again, and then he went on, "and so our foes shall have honour from something else than from this, that we have here taken a great false step."

Then there was a great roar that Mord handled the suit well; but it was said that Flosi and his men betook them only to quibbling and wrong.

Flosi asked Eyjolf if this could be good law, but he said he could not surely tell, but said the Lawman must settle this knotty point.

Then Thorkel Geiti's son went on their behalf to tell the Lawman how things stood, and asked whether this were good law that Mord had said.

"More men are great lawyers now," says Skapti, "than I thought. I must tell thee, then, that this is such good law in all points, that there is not a word to say against it; but still I thought that I alone would know this, now that Njal was dead, for he was the only man I ever knew who knew it.

Then Thorkel went back to Flosi and Eyjolf, and said that this was good law.

Then Mord Valgard's son went to the court and took witness. "I take witness to this," he said, "that I bid those neighbours on the inquest in the suit which I set on foot against Flosi Thord's son now to utter their finding, and to find it either against him or for him; I bid them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear it across the court."

Then the neighbours on Mord's inquest went to the

court, and one uttered their finding, but all confirmed it by their consent; and they spoke thus, word for word—

"Mord Valgard's son summoned nine of us thanes on this inquest, but here we stand five of us, but four have been challenged and set aside, and now witness has been borne as to the absence of the four who ought to have uttered this finding along with us, and now we are bound by law to utter our finding. We were summoned to bear this witness, whether Flosi Thord's son rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. He summoned us to utter all those words which it was lawful for us to utter, and which he should call on us to answer before the court, and which belong to this suit; he summoned us, so that we heard what he said; he summoned us in a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to him, and now we have all sworn an oath, and found our lawful finding, and are all agreed, and we utter our finding against Flosi, and we say that he is truly guilty in this suit. We nine men on this inquest of neighbours so shapen, utter this our finding before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head

of John, as Mord summoned us to do; but this is the finding of all of us."

Again a second time they uttered their finding against Flosi, and uttered it first about the wounds, and last about the assault, but all their other words they uttered just as they had before uttered their finding against Flosi, and brought him in truly guilty in the suit.

Then Mord Valgard's son went before the court, and took witness that those neighbours whom he had summoned in the suit which he had set on foot against Flosi Thord's son had now uttered their finding, and brought him in truly guilty in the suit; he took witness to this for his own part, or for those who might wish to make use of this witness.

Again a second time Mord took witness and said—

"I take witness to this that I call on Flosi, or that man who has to undertake the lawful defence which he has handed over to him, to begin his defence to this suit which I have set on foot against him, for now all the steps and proofs have been brought forward which belong by law to this suit; all witness borne, the finding of the inquest uttered and brought in, witness taken to the finding, and to all the steps which have gone before; but if any such thing arises in their lawful defence which

I need to turn into a suit against them, then I claim the right to set that suit on foot against them. I bid this my lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear."

"It gladdens me now, Eyjolf," said Flosi, "in my heart to think what a wry face they will make, and how their pates will tingle when thou bringest forward our defence."

CHAPTER CXLII.

OF EYJOLF BOLVERK'S SON.

THEN Eyjolf Bolverk's son went before the court, and took witness to this—

"I take witness that this is a lawful defence in this cause, that ye have pleaded the suit in the East-firthers' Court, when ye ought to have pleaded it in the Northlanders' Court; for Flosi has declared himself one of the Thingmen of Askel the priest; and here now are those two witnesses who were by, and who will bear witness that Flosi handed over his priesthood to his brother Thorgeir, but afterwards declared himself one of Askel the priest's Thingmen. I take witness to this for my own part, and for those who may need to make use of it."

Again Eyjolf took witness — "I take witness," he

said, "to this, that I bid Mord who pleads this suit, or the next of kin, to listen to my oath, and to my declaration of the defence which I am about to bring forward; I bid him by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear me."

Again Eyjolf took witness—

"I take witness to this, that I swear an oath on the book, a lawful oath, and say it before God, that I will so defend this cause, in the most truthful, and most just, and most lawful way, so far as I know, and so fulfil all lawful duties which belong to me at this Thing."

Then Eyjolf said—

"These two men I take to witness that I bring forward this lawful defence that this suit was pleaded in another Quarter Court, than that in which it ought to have been pleaded; and I say that for this sake their suit has come to naught; I utter this defence in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court."

After that he let all the witness be brought forward which belonged to the defence, and then he took witness to all the steps in the defence to prove that they had all been duly taken.

After that Eyjolf again took witness and said—

"I take witness to this, that I forbid the judges, by a lawful protest before the priest, to utter judgment in

the suit of Mord and his friends, for now a lawful defence has been brought before the court. I forbid you by a protest made before a priest; by a full, fair, and binding protest; as I have a right to forbid you by the common custom of the Althing, and by the law of the land."

After that he called on the judges to pronounce for the defence.

Then Asgrim and his friends brought on the other suits for the Burning, and those suits took their course.

CHAPTER CXLIII.

THE COUNSEL OF THORHALL ASGRIM'S SON.

Now Asgrim and his friends sent a man to Thorhall, and let him be told in what a strait they had come.

"Too far off was I now," answers Thorhall, "for this cause might still not have taken this turn if I had been by. I now see their course that they must mean to summon you to the Fifth Court for contempt of the Thing. They must also mean to divide the Eastfirthers Court in the suit for the Burning, so that no judgment may be given, for now they behave so as to shew that they will stay at no ill. Now shalt thou go back to them as quickly

as thou canst, and say that Mord must summon them both, both Flosi and Eyjolf, for having brought money into the Fifth Court, and make it a case of lesser outlawry. Then he shall summon them with a second summons for that they have brought forward that witness which had nothing to do with their cause, and so were guilty of contempt of the Thing; and tell them that I say this, that if two suits for lesser outlawry hang over one and the same man, that he shall be adjudged a thorough outlaw at once. And for this ye must set your suits on foot first, that then ye will first go to trial and judgment."

Now the messenger went his way back and told Mord and Asgrim.

After that they went to the Hill of Laws, and Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness to this that I summon Flosi Thord's son, for that he gave money for his help here at the Thing to Eyjolf Bolverk's son. I say that he ought on this charge to be made a guilty outlaw, for this sake alone to be forwarded or to be allowed the right of frithstow,* if his fine and bail are brought forward at the execution levied on his house and goods, but else to become a thorough outlaw. I say all his goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who

* An old English law term for asylum or sanctuary.

have the right by law to take his goods after he has been outlawed. I summon this cause before the Fifth Court, whither the cause ought to come by law; I summon it to be pleaded now and to full outlawry. I summon with a lawful summons. I summon in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws."

With a like summons he summoned Eyjolf Bolverk's son, for that he had taken and received the money, and he summoned him for that sake to the Fifth Court.

Again a second time he summoned Flosi and Eyjolf, for that sake that they had brought forward, that witness at the Thing which had nothing lawfully to do with the cause of the parties, and had so been guilty of contempt of the Thing; and he laid the penalty for that at lesser outlawry.

Then they went away to the Court of Laws, there the Fifth Court was then set.

Now when Mord and Asgrim had gone away, then the judges in the Eastfirthers' Court could not agree how they should give judgment, for some of them wished to give judgment for Flosi, but some for Mord and Asgrim. Then Flosi and Eyjolf tried to divide the court, and there they stayed, and lost time over that while the summoning at the Hill of Laws was going on.

A little while after Flosi and Eyjolf were told that they had been summoned at the Hill of Laws into the Fifth Court, each of them with two summons. Then Eyjolf said—

"In an evil hour have we loitered here while they have been before us in quickness of summoning. Now hath come out Thorhall's cunning, and no man is his match in wit. Now they have the first right to plead their cause before the court, and that was everything for them; but still we will go to the Hill of Laws, and set our suit on foot against them, though that will now stand us in little stead."

Then they fared to the Hill of Laws, and Eyjolf summoned them for contempt of the Thing.

After that they went to the Fifth Court.

Now we must say that when Mord and Asgrim came to the Fifth Court, Mord took witness and bade them listen to his oath and the declaration of his suit, and to all those proofs and steps which he meant to bring forward against Flosi and Eyjolf. He bade them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges could hear him across the court.

In the Fifth Court vouchers had to follow the oaths of the parties, and they had to take an oath after them.

Mord took witness.

"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I take a Fifth Court oath. I pray God so to help me in this light and in the next, as I shall plead this suit as I know to be most truthful, and just, and lawful. I believe with all my heart that Flosi is truly guilty in this suit, if I may bring forward my proofs; and I have not brought money into this court in this suit, and I will not bring it. I have not taken money, and I will not take it, neither for a lawful nor for an unlawful end."

The men who were Mord's vouchers then went two of them before the court, and took witness to this—

"We take witness that we take an oath on the book, a lawful oath; we pray God so to help us two in this light and in the next, as we lay it on our honour that we believe with all our hearts that Mord will so plead this suit as he knows to be most truthful, and most just, and most lawful, and that he hath not brought money into this court in this suit to help himself, and that he will not offer it, and that he hath not taken money, nor will he take it, either for a lawful or unlawful end."

Mord had summoned nine neighbours who lived next to the Thingfield on the inquest in the suit, and then Mord took witness, and declared those four suits which he had set on foot against Flosi and Eyjolf; and Mord

used all those words in his declaration that he had used in his summons. He declared his suits for outlawry in the same shape before the Fifth Court as he had uttered them when he summoned the defendants.

Mord took witness, and bade those nine neighbours on the inquest to take their seats west on the river bank.

Mord took witness again, and bade Flosi and Eyjolf to challenge the inquest.

They went up to challenge the inquest, and looked narrowly at them, but could get none of them set aside; then they went away as things stood, and were very ill pleased with their case.

Then Mord took witness, and bade those nine neighbours whom he had before called on the inquest, to utter their finding, and to bring it in either for or against Flosi.

Then the neighbours on Mord's inquest came before the court, and one uttered the finding, but all the rest confirmed it by their consent. They had all taken the Fifth Court oath, and they brought in Flosi as truly guilty in the suit, and brought in their finding against him. They brought it in in such a shape before the Fifth Court over the head of the same man over whose head Mord had already declared his suit. After that

they brought in all those findings which they were bound to bring in in all the other suits, and all was done in lawful form.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son and Flosi watched to find a flaw in the proceedings, but could get nothing done.

Then Mord Valgard's son took witness. "I take witness," said he, "to this, that these nine neighbours whom I called on these suits which I have had hanging over the heads of Flosi Thord's son, and Eyjolf Bolverk's son, have now uttered their finding, and have brought them in truly guilty in these suits."

He took this witness for his own part.

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has taken his lawful defence in hand, now to begin their defence; for now all the steps and proofs have been brought forward in the suit, summons to listen to oaths, oaths taken, suit declared, witness taken to the summons, neighbours called on to take their seats on the inquest, defendant called on to challenge the inquest, finding uttered, witness taken to the finding."

He took this witness to all the steps that had been taken in the suit.

Then that man stood up over whose head the suit

had been declared and pleaded, and summed up the case. He summed up first how Mord had bade them listen to his oath, and to his declaration of the suit, and to all the steps and proofs in it; then he summed up next how Mord took his oath and his vouchers theirs; then he summed up how Mord pleaded his suit, and used the very words in his summing up that Mord had before used in declaring and pleading his suit, and which he had used in his summons, and he said that the suit came before the Fifth Court in the same shape as it was when he uttered it at the summoning. Then he summed up that men had borne witness to the summoning, and repeated all those words that Mord had used in his summons, and which they had used in bearing their witness, "and which I now," he said, "have used in my summing up, and they bore their witness in the same shape before the Fifth Court as he uttered them at the summoning." After that he summed up that Mord bade the neighbours on the inquest to take their seats, then he told next of all how he bade Flosi to challenge the inquest, or that man who had undertaken this lawful defence for him; then he told how the neighbours went to the court, and uttered their finding, and brought in Flosi truly guilty in the suit, and how they brought in the finding of an inquest of nine men in that shape before the Fifth Court.

Then he summed up how Mord took witness to all the steps in the suit, and how he had bidden the defendant to begin his defence.

After that Mord Valgard's son took witness. "I take witness," he said, "to this, that I forbid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has undertaken the lawful defence for him, to set up his defence; for now are all the steps taken which belong to the suit, when the case has been summed up and the proofs repeated."

After that the foreman added these words of Mord to his summing up.

Then Mord took witness, and prayed the judges to give judgment in this suit.

Then Gizur the white said, "Thou wilt have to do more yet, Mord, for four twelves can have no right to pass judgment."

Now Flosi said to Eyjolf, "What counsel is to be taken now?"

Then Eyjolf said, "Now we must make the best of a bad business; but still, we will bide our time, for now I guess that they will make a false step in their suit, for Mord prayed for judgment at once in the suit, but they ought to call and set aside six men out of the court, and after that they ought to offer us to call and set aside six other men, but we will not do that, for

then they ought to call and set aside those six men, and they will perhaps overlook that; then all their case has come to naught if they do not do that, for three twelves have to judge in every cause."

"Thou art a wise man, Eyjolf," said Flosi, "so that few can come nigh thee."

Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness," he said "to this, that I call and set aside these six men out of the court"—and named them all by name—"I do not allow you to sit in the court; I call you out and set you aside by the rightful custom of the Althing, and the law of the land."

After that he offered Eyjolf and Flosi, before witnesses, to call out by name and set aside other six men, but Flosi and Eyjolf would not call them out.

Then Mord made them pass judgment in the cause; but when the judgment was given, Eyjolf took witness, and said that all their judgment had come to naught, and also everything else that had been done, and his ground was that three twelves and one half had judged, when three only ought to have given judgment.

"And now we will follow up our suits before the Fifth Court," said Eyjolf, "and make them outlaws."

Then Gizur the white said to Mord Valgard's son—

"Thou hast made a very great mistake in taking

such a false step, and this is great ill-luck; but what counsel shall we now take, kinsman Asgrim?" says Gizur.

Then Asgrim said—"Now we will send a man to my son Thorhall, and know what counsel he will give us."

CHAPTER CXLIV.

BATTLE AT THE ALTHING.

Now Snorri the priest hears how the causes stood, and then he begins to draw up his men in array below "the Great Rift," between it and Hadbooth, and laid down beforehand to his men how they were to behave.

Now the messenger comes to Thorhall Asgrim's son, and tells him how things stood, and how Mord Valgard's son and his friends would all be made outlaws, and the suits for manslaughter be brought to naught.

But when he heard that, he was so shocked at it that he could not utter a word. He jumped up then from his bed, and clutched with both hands his spear, Skarphedinn's gift, and drove it through his foot; then flesh clung to the spear, and the eye of the boil too, for he had cut it clean out of the foot, but a torrent of blood and matter poured out, so that it fell in a stream

along the floor. Now he went out of the booth unhalting, and walked so hard that the messenger could not keep up with him, and so he goes until he came to the Fifth Court. There he met Grim the red, Flosi's kinsman, and as soon as ever they met, Thorhall thrust at him with the spear, and smote him on the shield and clove it in twain, but the spear passed right through him, so that the point came out between his shoulders. Thorhall cast him off his spear.

Then Kari Solmund's son caught sight of that, and said to Asgrim—

"Here, now, is come Thorhall thy son, and has straightway slain a man, and this is a great shame, if he alone shall have the heart to avenge the Burning."

"That shall not be," says Asgrim, "but let us turn on them now."

Then there was a mighty cry all over the host, and then they shouted their war-cries.

Flosi and his friends then turned against their foes, and both sides egged on their men fast.

Kari Solmund's son turned now thither where Arni Kol's son and Hallbjorn the strong were in front, and as soon as ever Hallbjorn saw Kari, he made a blow at him, and aimed at his leg, but Kari leapt up into the air, and Hallbjorn missed him. Kari turned on Arni Kol's

son and cut at him, and smote him on the shoulder, and cut asunder the shoulder blade and collar bone, and the blow went right down into his breast, and Arni fell down dead at once to earth.

After that he hewed at Hallbjorn and caught him on the shield, and the blow passed through the shield, and so down and cut off his great toe. Holmstein hurled a spear at Kari, but he caught it in the air, and sent it back, and it was a man's death in Flosi's band.

Thorgeir Craggeir came up to where Hallbjorn the strong was in front, and Thorgeir made such a spear-thrust at him with his left hand that Hallbjorn fell before it, and had hard work to get on his feet again, and turned away from the fight there and then. Then Thorgeir met Thorwalld Kettle rumble's son, and hewed at him at once with the axe, "the ogress of war," which Skarphedinn had owned. Thorwalld threw his shield before him, and Thorgeir hewed the shield and cleft it from top to bottom, but the upper horn of the axe made its way into his breast, and passed into his trunk, and Thorwalld fell and was dead at once.

Now it must be told how Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Thorhall his son, Hjallti Skeggi's son, and Gizur the white, made an onslaught where Flosi and the sons of Sigfus, and the other Burners were; then there was a

very hard fight, and the end of it was that they pressed on so hard, that Flosi and his men gave way before them. Gudmund the powerful, and Mord Valgard's son, and Thorgeir Craggeir, made their onslaught where the Axefirthers and Eastfirthers, and the men of Reykdale stood, and there too there was a very hard fight.

Kari Solmund's son came up where Bjarni Broddhelgi's son had the lead. Kari caught up a spear and thrust at him, and the blow fell on his shield. Bjarni slipped the shield on one side of him, else it had gone straight through him. Then he cut at Kari and aimed at his leg, but Kari drew back his leg and turned short round on his heel, and Bjarni missed him. Kari cut at once at him, and then a man ran forward and threw his shield before Bjarni. Kari cleft the shield in twain, and the point of the sword caught his thigh, and ripped up the whole leg down to the ankle. That man fell there and then, and was ever after a cripple so long as he lived.

Then Kari clutched his spear with both hands, and turned on Bjarni and thrust at him; he saw he had no other chance but to throw himself down sidelong away from the blow, but as soon as ever Bjarni found his feet, away he fell back out of the fight.

Thorgeir Craggeir and Gizur the white fell on there

where Holmstein the son of Bersi the wise, and Thorkel Geiti's son were leaders, and the end of the struggle was, that Holmstein and Thorkel gave way, and then arose a mighty hooting after them from the men of Gudmund the powerful.

Thorwalld Tjorfi's son of Lightwater got a great wound, he was shot in the forearm, and men thought that Halldor Gudmund the powerful's son had hurled the spear, but he bore that wound about with him all his life long, and got no atonement for it.

Now there was a mighty throng. But though we here tell of some of the deeds that were done, still there are far many more of which men have handed down no stories.

Flosi had told them that they should make for the stronghold in the Great Rift if they were worsted, "for there," said he "they will only be able to attack us on one side." But the band which Hall of the Side and his son Ljot led, had fallen away out of the fight before the onslaught of that father and son, Asgrim and Thorhall. They turned down east of Axewater, and Hall said—

"This is a sad state of things when the whole host of men at the Thing fight, and I would, kinsman Ljot, that we begged us help even though that be

brought against us by some men, and that we part them. Thou shalt wait for me at the foot of the bridge, and I will go to the booths and beg for help."

"If I see," said Ljot, "that Flosi and his men need help from our men, then I will at once run up and aid them."

"Thou wilt do in that as thou pleasest," says Hall, "but I pray thee to wait for me here."

Now flight breaks out in Flosi's band, and they all fly west across Axewater; but Asgrim and Gizur the white went after them and all their host. Flosi and his men turned down between the river and the Outwork booth. Snorri the priest had drawn up his men there in array, so thick that they could not pass that way, and Snorri the priest called out then to Flosi—

"Why fare ye in such haste, or who chase you?"

"Thou askest not this," answered Flosi; "because thou dost not know it already; but whose fault is it that we cannot get to the stronghold in the Great Rift?"

"It is not my fault," says Snorri, "but it is quite true that I know whose fault it is, and I will tell thee if thou wilt; it is the fault of Thorwalld cropbeard and Kol."

They were both then dead, but they had been the worst men in all Flosi's band.

Again Snorri said to his men—

"Now do both, cut at them and thrust at them, and drive them away hence, they will then hold out but a short while here, if the others attack them from below; but then ye shall not go after them, but let both sides shift for themselves."

The son of Skapti Thorod's son was Thorstein gapemouth, as was written before, he was in the battle with Gudmund the powerful, his father-in-law, and as soon as Skapti knew that, he went to the booth of Snorri the priest, and meant to beg for help to part them; but just before he had got as far as the door of Snorri's booth, there the battle was hottest of all. Asgrim and his friends, and his men were just coming up thither, and then Thorhall said to his father Asgrim—

"See there now is Skapti Thorod's son, father."

"I see him, kinsman," said Asgrim, and then he shot a spear at Skapti, and struck him just below where the calf was fattest, and so through both his legs. Skapti fell at the blow, and could not get up again, and the only counsel they could take who were by, was to drag Skapti flat on his face into the booth of a turf-cutter.

Then Asgrim and his men came up so fast that Flosi and his men gave way before them south along the river to the booths of the men of Modruvale. There

there was a man outside one booth whose name was Solvi; he was boiling broth in a great kettle, and had just then taken the meat out, and the broth was boiling as hotly as it could.

Solvi cast his eyes on the Eastfirthers as they fled, and they were then just over against him, and then he said—"Can all these cowards who fly here be Eastfirthers, and yet Thorkel Geiti's son, he ran by as fast as any one of them, and very great lies have been told about him when men say that he is all heart, but now no one ran faster than he."

Hallbjorn the strong was near by then, and said—

"Thou shalt not have it to say that we are all cowards."

And with that he caught hold of him, and lifted him up aloft, and thrust him head down into the broth-kettle. Solvi died at once; but then a rush was made at Hallbjorn himself, and he had to turn and fly.

Flosi threw a spear at Bruni Haflidi's son, and caught him at the waist, and that was his bane; he was one of Gudmund the powerful's band.

Thorstein Hlenni's son took the spear out of the wound, and hurled it back at Flosi, and hit him on the leg, and he got a great wound and fell; he rose up again at once.

Then they passed on to the Waterfirthers' booth, and then Hall and Ljot came from the east across the river, with all their band; but just when they came to the lava, a spear was hurled out of the band of Gudmund the powerful, and it struck Ljot in the middle, and he fell down dead at once; and it was never known surely who had done that manslaughter.

Flosi and his men turned up round the Waterfirther's booth, and then Thorgeir Craggeir said to Kari Solmund's son—

"Look, yonder now is Eyjolf Bolverk's son, if thou hast a mind to pay him off for the ring."

"That I ween is not far from my mind," says Kari, and snatched a spear from a man, and hurled it at Eyjolf, and it struck him in the waist, and went through him, and Eyjolf then fell dead to earth.

Then there was a little lull in the battle, and then Snorri the priest came up with his band, and Skapti was there in his company, and they ran in between them, and so they could not get at one another to fight.

Then Hall threw in his people with theirs, and was for parting them there and then, and so a truce was set, and was to be kept throughout the Thing, and then the bodies were laid out and borne to the church, and the wounds of those men were bound up who were hurt.

The day after men went to the Hill of Laws. Then Hall of the Side stood up and asked for a hearing, and got it at once ; and he spoke thus—

"Here there have been hard happenings in lawsuits and loss of life at the Thing, and now I will shew again that I am little-hearted, for I will now ask Asgrim and the others who take the lead in these suits, that they grant us an atonement on even terms;" and so he goes on with many fair words.

Kari Solmund's son said—

"Though all others take an atonement in their quarrels, yet will I take no atonement in my quarrel; for ye will wish to weigh these manslayings against the Burning, and we cannot bear that."

In the same way spoke Thorgeir Craggeir.

Then Skapti Thorod's son stood up and said—

"Better had it been for thee, Kari, not to have run away from thy father-in-law and thy brothers-in-law, than now to sneak out of this atonement."

Then Kari sang these verses—

"Warrior wight that weapon wieldest
Spare thy speering why we fled,
Oft for less falls hail of battle,
Forth we fled to wreak revenge;
Who was he, fainthearted foeman,
Who, when tongues of steel sung high,

Stole beneath the booth for shelter,
While his beard blushed red for shame?

"Many fetters Skapti fettered
When the men, the Gods of fight,
From the fray fared all unwilling
Where the skald scarce held his shield;
Then the suttlers dragged the lawyer
Stout in scolding to their booth,
Laid him low amongst the riffraff,
How his heart then quaked for fear.

"Men who skim the main on sea stag
Well in this ye shewed your sense,
Making game about the Burning,
Mocking Helgi, Grim, and Njal;
Now the moor round rocky Swinestye,*
As men run and shake their shields,
With another grunt shall rattle
When this Thing is past and gone."

Then there was great laughter. Snorri the priest smiled and sang this between his teeth, but so that many heard.

"Skill hath Skapti us to tell
Whether Asgrim's shaft flew well;
Holmstein hurried swift to flight,
Thorstein turned him soon to fight."

Now men burst out in great fits of laughter.

Then Hall of the Side said—

* "Swinestye," ironically for Swinefell, where Flosi lived.

"All men know what a grief I have suffered in the loss of my son Ljot; many will think that he would be valued dearest of all those men who have fallen here; but I will do this for the sake of an atonement—I will put no price on my son, and yet will come forward and grant both pledges and peace to those who are my adversaries. I beg thee, Snorri the priest, and other of the best men, to bring this about, that there may be an atonement between us."

Now he sits him down, and a great hum in his favour followed, and all praised his gentleness and goodwill.

Then Snorri the priest stood up and made a long and clever speech, and begged Asgrim and the others who took the lead in the quarrel to look towards an atonement.

Then Asgrim said—

"I made up my mind when Flosi made an inroad on my house that I would never be atoned with him; but now Snorri the priest, I will take an atonement from him for thy word's sake and other of our friends."

In the same way spoke Thorleif crow and Thorgrim the big, that they were willing to be atoned, and they urged in every way their brother Thorgeir Craggeir to take an atonement also; but he hung back, and says he would never part from Kari.

Then Gizur the white said—

"Now Flosi must see that he must make his choice, whether he will be atoned on the understanding that some will be out of the atonement."

Flosi says he will take that atonement; "and methinks it is so much the better," he says, "that I have fewer good men and true against me."

Then Gudmund the powerful said—

"I will offer to handsel peace on my behalf for the slayings that have happened here at the Thing, on the understanding that the suit for the Burning is not to fall to the ground."

In the same way spoke Gizur the white and Hjallti Skeggi's son, Asgrim Ellidagrim's son and Mord Valgard's son.

In this way the atonement came about, and then hands were shaken on it, and twelve men were to utter the award; and Snorri the priest was the chief man in the award, and others with him. Then the manslaughters were set off the one against the other, and those men who were over and above were paid for in fines. They also made an award in the suit about the Burning.

Njal was to be atoned for with a triple fine, and Bergthora with two. The slaying of Skarphedinn was

to be set off against that of Hauskuld the Whiteness priest. Both Grim and Helgi were to be paid for with double fines; and one full man-fine should be paid for each of those who had been burnt in the house.

No atonement was taken for the slaying of Thord Kari's son.

It was also in the award that Flosi and all the Burners should go abroad into banishment, and none of them was to sail the same summer unless he chose; but if he did not sail abroad by the time that three winters were spent, then he and all the Burners were to become thorough outlaws. And it was also said that their outlawry might be proclaimed either at the Harvest-Thing or Spring-Thing, whichever men chose; and Flosi was to stay abroad three winters.

As for Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, Glum Hilldir's son, and Kol Thorstein's son, they were never to be allowed to come back.

Then Flosi was asked if he would wish to have a price put upon his wound, but he said he would not take bribes for his hurt.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son had no fine awarded for him, for his unfairness and wrongfulness.

And now this settlement and atonement was handselled, and was well kept afterwards.

Asgrim and his friends gave Snorri the priest good gifts, and he had great honour from these suits.

Skapti got a fine for his hurt.

Gizur the white, and Hjallti Skeggi's son, and Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, asked Gudmund the powerful to come and see them at home. He accepted the bidding, and each of them gave him a gold ring.

Now Gudmund rides home north and had praise from every man for the part he had taken in these quarrels.

Thorgeir Craggeir asked Kari to go along with him, but yet first of all they rode with Gudmund right up to the fells north. Kari gave Gudmund a golden brooch, but Thorgeir gave him a silver belt, and each was the greatest treasure. So they parted with the utmost friendship, and Gudmund is out of this story.

Kari and Thorgeir rode south from the fell, and down to the Rapes,* and so to Thurso-water.

Flosi, and the Burners along with him, rode east to Fleetlithe, and he allowed the sons of Sigfus to settle their affairs at home. Then Flosi heard that Thorgeir and Kari had ridden north with Gudmund the

* This is the English equivalent for the Icelandic Hrepp, a district. It still lingers in "the Rape of Bramber," and other districts in Sussex and the south east.

powerful, and so the Burners thought that Kari and his friend must mean to stay in the north country; and then the sons of Sigfus asked leave to go east under Eyjafell to get in their money, for they had money out on call at Headbrink. Flosi gave them leave to do that, but still bade them be ware of themselves, and be as short a time about it as they could.

Then Flosi rode up by Godaland, and so north of Eyjafell Jokul, and did not draw bridle before he came home east to Swinefell.

Now it must be said that Hall of the Side had suffered his son to fall without a fine, and did that for the sake of an atonement, but then the whole host of men at the Thing agreed to pay a fine for him, and the money so paid was not less than eight hundred in silver, but that was four times the price of a man; but all the others who had been with Flosi got no fines paid for their hurts, and were very ill pleased at it.

The sons of Sigfus stayed at home two nights, but the third day they rode east to Raufarfell, and were there the night. They were fifteen together, and had not the least fear for themselves. They rode thence late, and meant to reach Headbrink about even. They baited their horses in Carlinedale, and then a great slumber came over them.

CHAPTER CXLV.

OF KARI AND THORGEIR.

THOSE two, Kari Solmund's son and Thorgeir Craggeir, rode that day east across Markfleet, and so on east to Selialandsmull. They found there some women. The wives knew them, and said to them—

"Ye two are less wanton than the sons of Sigfus yonder, but still ye fare unwarily."

"Why do ye talk thus of the sons of Sigfus, or what do ye know about them?"

"They were last night," they said, "at Raufarfell, and meant to get to Myrdale to-night, but still we thought they must have some fear of you, for they asked when ye would be likely to come home."

Then Kari and Thorgeir went on their way and spurred their horses.

"What shall we lay down for ourselves to do now," said Thorgeir, "or what is most to thy mind? Wilt thou that we ride on their track?"

"I will not hinder this," answers Kari, "nor will I say what ought to be done, for it may often be that

those live long who are slain with words alone ;* but I well know what thou meanest to take on thyself, thou must mean to take on thy hands eight men, and after all that is less than it was when thou slewest those seven in the sea-crags,† and let thyself down by a rope to get at them ; but it is the way with all you kinsmen, that ye always wish to be doing some famous feat, and now I can do no less than stand by thee and have my share in the story. So now we two alone will ride after them, for I see that thou hast so made up thy mind."

After that they rode east by the upper way, and did not pass by Holt, for Thorgeir would not that any blame should be laid at his brother's door for what might be done.

Then they rode east to Myrdale, and there they met a man who had turf-panniers on his horse. He began to speak thus—

"Too few men, messmate Thorgeir, hast thou now in thy company."

"How is that?" says Thorgeir.

"Why," said the other, "because the prey is now before thy hand. The sons of Sigfus rode by a while

* "With words alone." The English proverb, "Threatened men live long."

† "Sea crags." Hence Thorgeir got his surname "Craggeir."

ago, and mean to sleep the whole day east in Carlinedale, for they mean to go no farther to-night than to Headbrink."

After that they rode on their way east on Arnstacks heath, and there is nothing to be told of their journey before they came to Carlinedale-water.

The stream was high, and now they rode up along the river, for they saw there horses with saddles. They rode now thitherward, and saw that there were men asleep in a dell and their spears were standing upright in the ground a little below them. They took the spears from them, and threw them into the river.

Then Thorgeir said—

"Wilt thou that we wake them?"

"Thou hast not asked this," answers Kari, "because thou hast not already made up thy mind not to fall on sleeping men, and so to slay a shameful manslaughter."

After that they shouted to them, and then they all awoke and grasped at their arms.

They did not fall on them till they were armed.

Thorgeir Craggeir runs thither where Thorkell Sigfus' son stood, and just then a man ran behind his back, but before he could do Thorgeir any hurt, Thorgeir lifted the axe, "the ogress of war," with both hands, and dashed the hammer of the axe with a back-blow into the head

of him that stood behind him, so that his skull was shattered to small bits.

"Slain is this one," said Thorgeir; and down the man fell at once, and was dead.

But when he dashed the axe forward, he smote Thorkell on the shoulder, and hewed it off, arm and all.

Against Kari came Mord Sigfus' son, and Sigmund Sigfus' son, and Lambi Sigurd's son; the last ran behind Kari's back, and thrust at him with a spear; Kari caught sight of him, and leapt up as the blow fell, and stretched his legs far apart, and so the blow spent itself on the ground, but Kari jumped down on the spear-shaft, and snapped it in sunder. He had a spear in one hand, and a sword in the other, but no shield. He thrust with the right hand at Sigmund Sigfus' son, and smote him on his breast, and the spear came out between his shoulders, and down he fell and was dead at once. With his left hand he made a cut at Mord, and smote him on the hip, and cut it asunder, and his backbone too; he fell flat on his face, and was dead at once.

After that he turned sharp round on his heel like a whipping-top, and made at Lambi Sigurd's son, but he took the only way to save himself, and that was by running away as hard as he could.

Now Thorgeir turns against Leidolf the strong, and

each hewed at the other at the same moment, and Leidolf's blow was so great that it shore off that part of the shield on which it fell.

Thorgeir had hewn with "the Ogress of War," holding it with both hands, and the lower horn fell on the shield and clove it in twain, but the upper caught the collar bone and cut it in two, and tore on down into the breast and trunk. Kari came up just then, and cut off Leidolf's leg at mid-thigh, and then Leidolf fell and died at once.

Kettle of the Mark said—"We will now run for our horses, for we cannot hold our own here, for the overbearing strength of these men."

Then they ran for their horses, and leapt on their backs; and Thorgeir said—

"Wilt thou that we chase them? if so, we shall yet slay some of them."

"He rides last," says Kari, "whom I would not wish to slay, and that is Kettle of the Mark, for we have two sisters to wife; and besides, he has behaved best of all of them as yet in our quarrels."

Then they got on their horses, and rode till they came home to Holt. Then Thorgeir made his brothers fare away east to Skoga, for they had another farm there, and because Thorgeir would not that his brothers should be called truce-breakers.

Then Thorgeir kept many men there about him, so that there were never fewer than thirty fighting men there.

Then there was great joy there, and men thought Thorgeir had grown much greater, and pushed himself on; both he and Kari too. Men long kept in mind this hunting of theirs, how they two rode upon fifteen men and slew those five, but put those ten to flight who got away.

Now it is to be told of Kettle, that they rode as they best might till they came home to Swinefell, and told how bad their journey had been.

Flosi said it was only what was to be looked for; "and this is a warning that ye should never do the like again."

Flosi was the merriest of men, and the best of hosts, and it is so said that he had most of the chieftain in him of all the men of his time.

He was at home that summer, and the winter too.

But that winter, after Yule, Hall of the Side came from the east, and Kol his son. Flosi was glad at his coming, and they often talked about the matter of the Burning. Flosi said they had already paid a great fine, and Hall said it was pretty much what he had guessed would come of Flosi's and his friends' quarrel. Then

he asked him what counsel he thought best to be taken, and Hall answers—

"The counsel I give is, that thou beest atoned with Thorgeir if there be a choice, and yet he will be hard to bring to take any atonement."

"Thinkest thou that the manslaughters will then be brought to an end?" asks Flosi.

"I do not think so," says Hall; "but you will have to do with fewer foes if Kari be left alone; but if thou art not atoned with Thorgeir, then that will be thy bane."

"What atonement shall we offer him?" asks Flosi.

"You will all think that atonement hard," says Hall, "which he will take, for he will not hear of an atonement unless he be not called on to pay any fine for what he has just done, but he will have fines for Njal and his sons, so far as his third share goes."

"That is a hard atonement," says Flosi.

"For thee at least," says Hall, "that atonement is not hard, for thou hast not the blood-feud after the sons of Sigfus; their brothers have the blood-feud, and Hammond the halt after his son; but thou shalt now get an atonement from Thorgeir, for I will now ride to his house with thee, and Thorgeir will in anywise receive me well; but no man of those who are in this quarrel will dare to sit in his house on Fleetlithe if they are

out of the atonement, for that will be their bane; and, indeed, with Thorgeir's turn of mind, it is only what must be looked for."

Now the sons of Sigfus were sent for, and they brought this business before them; and the end of their speech was, on the persuasion of Hall, that they all thought what he said right, and were ready to be atoned.

Grani Gunnar's son and Gunnar Lambi's son, said—

"It will be in our power, if Kari be left alone behind, to take care that he be not less afraid of us than we of him."

"Easier said than done," says Hall, "and ye will find it a dear bargain to deal with him. Ye will have to pay a heavy fine before you have done with him."

After that they ceased speaking about it.

CHAPTER CXLVI.

THE AWARD OF ATONEMENT WITH THORGEIR CRAGGEIR.

HALL of the Side and his son Kol, seven of them in all, rode west over Loomnip's Sand, and so west over Arnstacksheath, and did not draw bridle till they came into Myrdale. There they asked whether Thorgeir

would be at home at Holt, and they were told that they would find him at home.

The men asked whither Hall meant to go.

"Thither to Holt," he said.

They said they were sure he went on a good errand.

He stayed there some while and baited their horses, and after that they mounted their horses and rode to Solheim about even, and they were there that night, but the day after they rode to Holt.

Thorgeir was out of doors, and Kari too, and their men, for they had seen Hall's coming. He rode in a blue cape, and had a little axe studded with silver in his hand; but when they came into the "town," Thorgeir went to meet him, and helped him off his horse, and both he and Kari kissed him and led him in between them into the sitting-room, and sate him down in the high seat on the dais, and they asked him tidings about many things.

He was there that night. Next morning Hall raised the question of the atonement with Thorgeir, and told him what terms they offered him; and he spoke about them with many fair and kindly words.

"It may be well known to thee," answers Thorgeir, "that I said I would take no atonement from the Burners."

"That was quite another matter then," says Hall; "ye were then wroth with fight, and, besides, ye have done great deeds in the way of manslaying since."

"I daresay ye think so," says Thorgeir, "but what atonement do ye offer to Kari?"

"A fitting atonement shall be offered him," says Hall, "if he will take it."

Then Kari said—

"I pray this of thee, Thorgeir, that thou wilt be atoned, for thy lot cannot be better than good."

"Methinks," says Thorgeir, "it is ill done to take an atonement, and sunder myself from thee, unless thou takest the same atonement as I."

"I will not take any atonement," says Kari, "but yet I say that we have avenged the Burning; but my son, I say, is still unavenged, and I mean to take that on myself alone, and see what I can get done."

But Thorgeir would take no atonement before Kari said that he would take it ill if he were not atoned. Then Thorgeir handselled a truce to Flosi and his men, as a step to a meeting for atonement; but Hall did the same on behalf of Flosi and the sons of Sigfus.

But ere they parted, Thorgeir gave Hall a gold ring and a scarlet cloak, but Kari gave him a silver brooch, and there were hung to it four crosses of gold. Hall

thanked them kindly for their gifts, and rode away with the greatest honour. He did not draw bridle till he came to Swinefell, and Flosi gave him a hearty welcome. Hall told Flosi all about his errand and the talk he had with Thorgeir, and also that Thorgeir would not take the atonement till Kari told him he would quarrel with him if he did not take it; but that Kari would take no atonement.

"There are few men like Kari," said Flosi, "and I would that my mind were shapen altogether like his."

Hall and Kol stayed there some while, and afterwards they rode west at the time agreed on to the meeting for atonement, and met at Headbrink, as had been settled between them.

Then Thorgeir came to meet them from the west, and then they talked over their atonement, and all went off as Hall had said.

Before the atonement, Thorgeir said that Kari should still have the right to be at his house all the same if he chose.

"And neither side shall do the others any harm at my house; and I will not have the trouble of gathering in the fines from each of the Burners; but my will is that Flosi alone shall be answerable for them to me, but he must get them in from his followers. My will also

is that all that award which was made at the Thing about the Burning shall be kept and held to; and my will also is, Flosi, that thou payest me up my third share in unclipped coin."

Flosi went quickly into all these terms.

Thorgeir neither gave up the banishment nor the outlawry.

Now Flosi and Hall rode home east, and then Hall said to Flosi—

Keep this atonement well, son-in-law, both as to going abroad and the pilgrimage to Rome,* and the fines, and then thou wilt be thought a brave man, though thou hast stumbled into this misdeed, if thou fulfillest handsomely all that belongs to it."

Flosi said it should be so.

Now Hall rode home east, but Flosi rode home to Swinefell, and was at home afterwards.

CHAPTER CXLVII.

KARI COMES TO BJORN'S HOUSE IN THE MARK.

THORGEIR CRAGGEIR rode home from the peacemeeting,

* "Pilgrimage to Rome." This condition had not been mentioned before.

and Kari asked whether the atonement had come about. Thorgeir said that they now fully atoned.

Then Kari took his horse and was for riding away.

"Thou hast no need to ride away," says Thorgeir, "for it was laid down in our atonement that thou shouldst be here as before if thou chosest."

"It shall not be so, cousin, for as soon as ever I slay a man they will be sure to say that thou wert in the plot with me, and I will not have that; but I wish this, that thou wouldst let me hand over in trust to thee my goods, and the estates of me and my wife Helga Njal's daughter, and my three daughters, and then they will not be seized by those adversaries of mine."

Thorgeir agreed to what Kari wished to ask of him, and then Thorgeir had Kari's goods handed over to him in trust.

After that Kari rode away. He had two horses and his weapons and outer clothing, and some ready money in gold and silver.

Now Kari rode west by Selialandsmull and up along Markfleet, and so on up into Thorsmark. There there are three farms all called "Mark." At the midmost farm dwelt that man whose name was Bjorn, and his surname was Bjorn the white; he was the son of Kadal, the son of Bjalfi. Bjalfi had been the freedman of As-

gerda, the mother of Njal and Holt-Thorir; Bjorn had to wife Valgerda, she was the daughter of Thorbrand, the son of Asbrand. Her mother's name was Gudlauga, she was a sister of Hamond, the father of Gunnar of Lithend; she was given away to Bjorn for his money's sake, and she did not love him much, but yet they had children together, and they had enough and to spare in the house.

Bjorn was a man who was always boasting and praising himself, but his housewife thought that bad. He was sharpsighted and swift of foot.

Thither Kari turned in as a guest, and they took him by both hands, and he was there that night. But the next morning Kari said to Bjorn—

"I wish thou wouldst take me in, for I should think myself well housed here with thee. I would too that thou shouldst be with me in my journeyings, as thou art a sharpsighted, swiftfooted man, and besides I think thou wouldst be dauntless in an onslaught."

"I can't blame myself," says Bjorn, "for wanting either sharp sight, or dash, or any other bravery; but no doubt thou camest hither because all thy other earths are stopped. Still at thy prayer Kari, I will not look on thee as an everyday man; I will surely help thee in all that thou askest."

"The trolls take thy boasting and bragging," said his housewife, "and thou shouldst not utter such stuff and silliness to any one than thyself. As for me, I will willingly give Kari meat and other good things, which I know will be useful to him; but on Bjorn's hardihood, Kari, thou shalt not trust, for I am afraid that thou wilt find it quite otherwise than he says."

"Often hast thou thrown blame upon me," said Bjorn, "but for all that I put so much faith in myself that though I am put to the trial I will never give way to any man; and the best proof of it is this, that few try a tussle with me because none dare to do so."

Kari was there some while in hiding, and few men knew of it.

Now men think that Kari must have ridden to the north country to see Gudmund the powerful, for Kari made Bjorn tell his neighbours that he had met Kari on the beaten track, and that he rode thence up into Godaland, and so north to Goose-sand, and then north to Gudmund the powerful at Modruvale.

So that story was spread over all the country.

CHAPTER CXLVIII.

OF FLOSI AND THE BURNERS.

Now Flosi spoke to the Burners, his companions—

"It will no longer serve our turn to sit still, for now we shall have to think of our going abroad and of our fines, and of fulfilling our atonement as bravely as we can, and let us take a passage wherever it seems most likely to get one."

They bade him see to all that. Then Flosi said—

"We will ride east to Hornfirth; for there that ship is laid up, which is owned by Eyjolf nosy, a man from Drontheim, but he wants to take to him a wife here, and he will not get the match made unless he settles himself down here. We will buy the ship of him, for we shall have many men and little freight. The ship is big and will take us all."

Then they ceased talking of it.

But a little after they rode east, and did not stop before they came east to Bjornness in Hornfirth, and there they found Eyjolf, for he had been there as a guest that winter.

There Flosi and his men had a hearty welcome, and they were there the night. Next morning Flosi dealt

with the captain for the ship, but he said he would not be hard to sell the ship if he could get what he wanted for her. Flosi asked him in what coin he wished to be paid for her; the Easterling says he wanted land for her near where he then was.

Then Eyjolf told Flosi all about his dealings with his host, and Flosi says he will pull an oar with him, so that his marriage bargain might be struck, and buy the ship of him afterwards. The Easterling was glad at that. Flosi offered him land at Borgarhaven, and now the Easterling holds on with his suit to his host when Flosi was by, and Flosi threw in a helping word, so that the bargain was brought about between them.

Flosi made over the land at Borgarhaven to the Easterling, but shook hands on the bargain for the ship. He got also from the Easterling twenty hundreds in wares, and that was also in their bargain for the land.

Now Flosi rode back home. He was so beloved by his men that their wares stood free to him to take either on loan or gift, just as he chose.

He rode home to Swinefell, and was at home a while.

Then Flosi sent Kol Thorstein's son and Gunnar Lambi's son east to Hornfirth. They were to be there by the ship, and to fit her out, and set up booths, and

sack the wares, and get all things together that were needful.

Now we must tell of the sons of Sigfus how they say to Flosi that they will ride west to Fleetlithe to set their houses in order, and get wares thence, and such other things as they needed. "Kari is not there now to be guarded against," they say, "if he is in the north country as is said."

"I know not," answers Flosi, "as to such stories, whether there be any truth in what is said of Kari's journeyings; methinks, we have often been wrong in believing things which are nearer to learn than this. My counsel is that ye go many of you together, and part as little as ye can, and be as wary of yourselves as ye may. Thou, too, Kettle of the Mark shalt bear in mind that dream which I told thee, and which thou prayedst me to hide; for many are those in thy company who were then called."

"All must come to pass as to man's life," said Kettle, "as it is foredoomed; but good go with thee for thy warning."

Now they spoke no more about it.

After that the sons of Sigfus busked them and those men with them who were meant to go with them. They were eight in all, and then they rode away, and ere they went they kissed Flosi, and he bade them farewell, and

said he and some of those who rode away would not see each other more. But they would not let themselves be hindered. They rode now on their way, and Flosi said that they should take his wares in Middleland, and carry them east, and do the same in Landsbreach and Woodcombe.

After that they rode to Skaptartongue, and so on the fell, and north of Eyjafell Jokul, and down into Godaland, and so down into the woods in Thorsmark.

Bjorn of the Mark caught sight of them coming, and went at once to meet them.

Then they greeted each other well, and the sons of Sigfus asked after Kari Solmund's son.

"I met Kari," said Bjorn, "and that is now very long since; he rode hence north on Goose-sand, and meant to go to Gudmund the powerful, and methought if he were here now, he would stand in awe of you, for he seemed to be left all alone."

Grani Gunnar's son said—

"He shall stand more in awe of us yet before we have done with him, and he shall learn that as soon as ever he comes within spearthrow of us; but as for us, we do not fear him at all, now that he is all alone."

Kettle of the Mark bade them be still, and bring out no big words.

Bjorn asked when they would be coming back.

"We shall stay near a week in Fleetlithe," said they; and so they told him when they should be riding back on the fell.

With that they parted.

Now the sons of Sigfus rode to their homes, and their households were glad to see them. They were there near a week.

Now Bjorn comes home and sees Kari, and told him all about the doings of the sons of Sigfus, and their purpose.

Kari said he had shewn in this great faithfulness to him, and Bjorn said—

"I should have thought there was more risk of any other man's failing in that than of me if I had pledged my help or care to any one."

"Ah," said his mistress, "but you may still be bad and yet not be so bad as to be a traitor to thy master."

Kari stayed there six nights after that.

CHAPTER CXLIX.

OF KARI AND BJORN.

Now Kari talks to Bjorn and says—

"We shall ride east across the fell and down into Skaptartongue, and fare stealthily over Flosi's country, for I have it in my mind to get myself carried abroad east in Alftafirth."

"This is a very riskful journey," said Bjorn, "and few would have the heart to take it save thou and I."

"If thou backest Kari ill," said his housewife, "know this, that thou shalt never come afterwards into my bed, and my kinsmen shall share our goods between us."

"It is likelier, mistress," said he, "that thou wilt have to look out for something else than this if thou hast a mind to part from me; for I will bear my own witness to myself what a champion and daredevil I am when weapons clash."

Now they rode that day east on the fell to the north of the Jokul, but never on the highway, and so down into Skaptartongue, and above all the homesteads to Skaptarwater, and led their horses into a dell, but they themselves were on the look-out, and had so placed themselves that they could not be seen.

Then Kari said to Bjorn—

"What shall we do now if they ride down upon us here from the fell?"

"Are there not but two things to be done," said Bjorn; "one to ride away from them north under the crags, and so let them ride by us, or to wait and see if any of them lag behind, and then to fall on them."

They talked much about this, and one while Bjorn was for flying as fast as he could in every word he spoke, and at another for staying and fighting it out with them, and Kari thought this the greatest sport.

The sons of Sigfus rode from their homes the same day that they had named to Bjorn. They came to the Mark and knocked at the door there, and wanted to see Bjorn; but his mistress went to the door and greeted them. They asked at once for Bjorn, and she said he had ridden away down under Eyjafell, and so east under Selialandsmull, and on east to Holt, "for he has some money to call in thereabouts," she said.

They believed this, for they knew that Bjorn had money out at call there.

After that they rode east on the fell, and did not stop before they came to Skaptartongue, and so rode down along Skaptarwater, and baited their horses just where Kari had thought they would. Then they split their

band. Kettle of the Mark rode east into Middleland, and eight men with him, but the others laid them down to sleep, and were not ware of aught until Kari and Bjorn came up to them. A little ness ran out there into the river; into it Kari went and took his stand, and bade Bjorn stand back to back with him, and not to put himself too forward, "but give me all the help thou canst."

"Well," says Bjorn, "I never had it in my head that any man should stand before me as a shield, but still as things are thou must have thy way; but for all that, with my gift of wit and my swiftness I may be of some use to thee, and not harmless to our foes."

Now they all rose up and ran at them, and Modolf Kettle's son was quickest of them, and thrust at Kari with his spear. Kari had his shield before him, and the blow fell on it, and the spear stuck fast in the shield. Then Kari twists the shield so smartly, that the spear snapped short off, and then he drew his sword and smote at Modolf; but Modolf made a cut at him too, and Kari's sword fell on Modolf's hilt, and glanced off it on to Modolf's wrist, and took the arm off, and down it fell, and the sword too. Then Kari's sword passed on into Modolf's side, and between his ribs, and so Modolf fell down and was dead on the spot.

Grani Gunnar's son snatched up a spear and hurled

it at Kari, but Kari thrust down his shield so hard that the point stood fast in the ground, but with his left hand he caught the spear in the air, and hurled it back at Grani, and caught up his shield again at once with his left hand. Grani had his shield before him, and the spear came on the shield and passed right through it, and into Grani's thigh just below the small guts, and through the limb, and so on, pinning him to the ground, and he could not get rid of the spear before his fellows drew him off it, and carried him away on their shields, and laid him down in a dell.

There was a man who ran up to Kari's side, and meant to cut off his leg, but Bjorn cut off that man's arm, and sprang back again behind Kari, and they could not do him any hurt. Kari made a sweep at that same man with his sword, and cut him asunder at the waist.

Then Lambi Sigfus' son rushed at Kari, and hewed at him with his sword. Kari caught the blow sideways on his shield, and the sword would not bite; then Kari thrust at Lambi with his sword just below the breast, so that the point came out between his shoulders, and that was his deathblow.

Then Thorstein Geirleif's son rushed at Kari, and thought to take him in flank, but Kari caught sight of him, and swept at him with his sword across the

shoulders, so that the man was cleft asunder at the chine.

A little while after he gave Gunnar of Skal, a good man and true, his deathblow. As for Bjorn, he had wounded three men who had tried to give Kari wounds, and yet he was never so far forward that he was in the least danger, nor was he wounded, nor was either of those companions hurt in that fight, but all those that got away were wounded.

Then they ran for their horses, and galloped them off across Skaptarwater as hard as they could, and they were so scared that they stopped at no house, nor did they dare to stay and tell the tidings anywhere.

Kari and Bjorn hooted and shouted after them as they galloped off. So they rode east to Woodcombe, and did not draw bridle till they came to Swinefell.

Flosi was not at home when they came thither, and that was why no hue and cry was made thence after Kari.

This journey of theirs was thought most shameful by all men.

Kari rode to Skal, and gave notice of these manslayings as done by his hand; there, too, he told them of the death of their master and five others, and of Grani's wound, and said it would be better to bear him to the house if he were to live.

Bjorn said he could not bear to slay him, though he said he was worthy of death; but those who answered him said they were sure few had bitten the dust before him. But Bjorn told them he had it now in his power to make as many of the Sidemen as he chose bite the dust; to which they said it was a bad look out.

Then Kari and Bjorn ride away from the house.

CHAPTER CL.

MORE OF KARI AND BJORN.

THEN Kari asked Bjorn—

"What counsel shall we take now? Now I will try what thy wit is worth."

"Dost thou think now," answered Bjorn, "that much lies on our being as wise as ever we can?"

"Ay," said Kari, "I think so surely."

"Then our counsel is soon taken," says Bjorn. "We will cheat them all as though they were giants; and now we will make as though we were riding north on the fell, but as soon as ever we are out of sight behind the brae, we will turn down along Skaptarwater, and hide us there where we think handiest, so long as the hue and cry is hottest, if they ride after us."

"So will we do," said Kari; "and this I had meant to do all along."

"And so you may put it to the proof," said Bjorn, "that I am no more of an every-day body in wit than I am in bravery."

Now Kari and his companion rode as they had purposed down along Skaptarwater, till they came where a branch of the stream ran away to the south-east; then they turned down along the middle branch, and did not draw bridle till they came into Middleland, and on that moor which is called Kringlemire; it has a stream of lava all around it.

Then Kari said to Bjorn that he must watch their horses, and keep a good look-out; "but as for me," he says, "I am heavy with sleep."

So Bjorn watched the horses, but Kari lay him down, and slept but a very short while ere Bjorn waked him up again, and he had already led their horses together, and they were by their side. Then Bjorn said to Kari—

"Thou standest in much need of me though! A man might easily have run away from thee if he had not been as brave-hearted as I am; for now thy foes are riding upon thee, and so thou must up and be doing."

Then Kari went away under a jutting crag, and Bjorn said—

"Where shall I stand now?"

"Well!" answers Kari, "now there are two choices before thee; one is, that thou standest at my back and have my shield to cover thyself with, if it can be of any use to thee; and the other is, to get on thy horse and ride away as fast as thou canst."

"Nay," says Bjorn, "I will not do that, and there are many things against it; first of all, may be, if I ride away, some spiteful tongues might begin to say that I ran away from thee for faintheartedness; and another thing is, that I well know what game they will think there is in me, and so they will ride after me, two or three of them, and then I should be of no use or help to thee after all. No! I will rather stand by thee and keep them off so long as it is fated."

Then they had not long to wait ere horses with pack-saddles were driven by them over the moor, and with them went three men.

Then Kari said—

"These men see us not."

"Then let us suffer them to ride on," said Bjorn.

So those three rode on past them; but the six others then came riding right up to them, and they all leapt off their horses straightway in a body, and turned on Kari and his companion.

First, Glum Hildir's son rushed at them, and thrust at Kari with a spear; Kari turned short round on his heel, and Glum missed him, and the blow fell against the rock. Bjorn sees that, and hewed at once the head off Glum's spear. Kari leant on one side and smote at Glum with his sword, and the blow fell on his thigh, and took off the limb high up in the thigh, and Glum died at once.

Then Vebrand and Asbrand the sons of Thorbrand ran up to Kari, but Kari flew at Vebrand and thrust his sword through him, but afterwards he hewed off both of Asbrand's feet from under him.

In this bout both Kari and Bjorn were wounded.

Then Kettle of the Mark rushed at Kari, and thrust at him with his spear. Kari threw up his leg, and the spear stuck in the ground, and Kari leapt on the spear-shaft, and snapped it in sunder.

Then Kari grasped Kettle in his arms, and Bjorn ran up just then, and wanted to slay him, but Kari said—

"Be still now. I will give Kettle peace; for though it may be that Kettle's life is in my power, still I will never slay him."

Kettle answers never a word, but rode away after his companions, and told those the tidings who did not know them already.

They told also these tidings to the men of the Hundred, and they gathered together at once a great force of armed men, and went straightway up all the water-courses, and so far up on the fell that they were three days in the chase; but after that they turned back to their own homes, but Kettle and his companions rode east to Swinefell, and told the tidings there.

Flosi was little stirred at what had befallen them, but said no one could tell whether things would stop there, for there is no man like Kari of all that are now left in Iceland."

CHAPTER CLI.

OF KARI AND BJORN AND THORGEIR.

Now we must tell of Bjorn and Kari that they ride down on the Sand, and lead their horses under the banks where the wild oats grew, and cut the oats for them, that they might not die of hunger. Kari made such a near guess, that he rode away thence at the very time that they gave over seeking for him. He rode by night up through the Hundred, and after that he took to the fell; and so on all the same way as they had followed when they rode east, and did not stop till they came to Midmark.

Then Bjorn said to Kari—

"Now shalt thou be my great friend before my mistress, for she will never believe one word of what I say; but everything lies on what you do, so now repay me for the good following which I have yielded to thee."

"So it shall be; never fear," says Kari.

After that they ride up to the homestead, and then the mistress asked them what tidings, and greeted them well.

"Our troubles have rather grown greater, old lass!"

She answered little, and laughed; and then the mistress went on to ask—

"How did Bjorn behave to thee, Kari?"

"Bare is back," he answers, "without brother behind it," and Bjorn behaved well to me. He wounded three men, and, besides, he is wounded himself, and he stuck as close to me as he could in everything."

They were three nights there, and after that they rode to Holt to Thorgeir, and told him alone these tidings, for those tidings had not yet been heard there.

Thorgeir thanked him, and it was quite plain that he was glad at what he heard. He asked Kari what now was undone which he meant to do.

"I mean," answers Kari, "to kill Gunnar Lambi's

son and Kol Thorstein's son, if I can get a chance. Then we have slain fifteen men, reckoning those five whom we two slew together. But one boon I will now ask of thee."

Thorgeir said he would grant him whatever he asked.

"I wish, then, that thou wilt take under thy safeguard this man whose name is Bjorn, and who has been in these slayings with me, and that thou wilt change farms with him, and give him a farm ready stocked here close by thee, and so hold thy hand over him that no vengeance may befall him; but all this will be an easy matter for thee who art such a chief."

"So it shall be," says Thorgeir.

Then he gave Bjorn a ready-stocked farm at Asolfskal, but he took the farm in the Mark into his own hands. Thorgeir flitted all Bjorn's household stuff and goods to Asolfskal, and all his live stock; and Thorgeir settled all Bjorn's quarrels for him, and he was reconciled to them with a full atonement. So Bjorn was thought to be much more of a man than he had been before.

Then Kari rode away, and did not draw rein till he came west to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. He gave Kari a most hearty welcome, and Kari told

him of all the tidings that had happened in these slayings.

Asgrim was well pleased at them, and asked what Kari meant to do next.

"I mean," said Kari, "to fare abroad after them, and so dog their footsteps and slay them, if I can get at them."

Asgrim said there was no man like him for bravery and hardihood.

He was there some nights, and after that he rode to Gizur the white, and he took him by both hands. Kari stayed there some while, and then he told Gizur that he wished to ride down to Eyrar.

Gizur gave Kari a good sword at parting.

Now he rode down to Eyrar, and took him a passage with Kolbein the black; he was an Orkneyman and an old friend of Kari, and he was the most forward and brisk of men.

He took Kari by both hands, and said that one fate should befall both of them.

CHAPTER CLII.

FLOSI GOES ABROAD.

Now Flosi rides east to Hornfirth, and most of the men in his Thing followed him, and bore his wares east, as well as all his stores and baggage which he had to take with him.

After that they busked them for their voyage, and fitted out their ship.

Now Flosi stayed by the ship until they were "boun." But as soon as ever they got a fair wind they put out to sea. They had a long passage and hard weather.

Then they quite lost their reckoning, and sailed on and on, and all at once three great waves broke over their ship, one after the other. Then Flosi said they must be near some land, and that this was a ground-swell. A great mist was on them, but the wind rose so that a great gale overtook them, and they scarce knew where they were before they were dashed on shore at dead of night, and the men were saved, but the ship was dashed all to pieces, and they could not save their goods.

Then they had to look for shelter and warmth for themselves, and the day after they went up on a height. The weather was then good.

Flosi asked if any man knew this land, and there were two men of their crew who had fared thither before, and said they were quite sure they knew it, and, say they—

"We are come to Hrossey in the Orkneys."

"Then we might have made a better landing," said Flosi, "for Grim and Helgi, Njal's sons, whom I slew, were both of them of Earl Sigurd Hlodver's son's body-guard."

Then they sought for a hiding-place, and spread moss over themselves, and so lay for a while, but not for long, ere Flosi spoke and said—

"We will not lie here any longer until the landsmen are ware of us."

Then they arose, and took counsel, and then Flosi said to his men—

"We will go all of us and give ourselves up to the Earl; for there is naught else to do, and the Earl has our lives at his pleasure if he chooses to seek for them."

Then they all went away thence, and Flosi said that they must tell no man any tidings of their voyage, or

what manner of men they were, before he told them to the Earl.

Then they walked on until they met men who shewed them to the town, and then they went in before the Earl, and Flosi and all the others hailed him.

The Earl asked what men they might be, and Flosi told his name, and said out of what part of Iceland he was.

The Earl had already heard of the Burning, and so he knew the men at once, and then the Earl asked Flosi —"What hast thou to tell me about Helgi Njal's son, my henchman."

"This," said Flosi, "that I hewed off his head."

"Take them all," said the Earl.

Then that was done, and just then in came Thorstein, son of Hall of the Side. Flosi had to wife Steinvora, Thorstein's sister. Thorstein was one of Earl Sigurd's bodyguard, but when he saw Flosi seized and held, he went in before the Earl, and offered for Flosi all the goods he had.

The Earl was very wroth a long time, but at last the end of it was, by the prayer of good men and true, joined to those of Thorstein, for he was well backed by friends, and many threw in their word with his, that the Earl took an atonement from them, and gave Flosi

and all the rest of them peace. The Earl held to that custom of mighty men that Flosi took that place in his service which Helgi Njal's son had filled.

So Flosi was made Earl Sigurd's henchman, and he soon won his way to great love with the Earl.

CHAPTER CLIII.

KARI GOES ABROAD.

THOSE messmates Kari and Kolbein the black put out to sea from Eyrar half a month later than Flosi and his companions from Hornfirth.

They got a fine fair wind, and were but a short time out. The first land they made was the Fair Isle, it lies between Shetland and the Orkneys. There that man whose name was David the white took Kari into his house, and he told him all that he had heard for certain about the doings of the Burners. He was one of Kari's greatest friends, and Kari stayed with him for the winter.

There they heard tidings from the west out of the Orkneys of all that was done there.

Earl Sigurd bade to his feast at Yule Earl Gilli, his brother-in-law, out of the Southern Isles; he had to wife Swanlauga, Earl Sigurd's sister; and then too came

to see Earl Sigurd that king from Ireland whose name was Sigtrygg. He was a son of Olaf rattle, but his mother's name was Kormlada; she was the fairest of all women, and best gifted in everything that was not in her own power, but it was the talk of men that she did all things ill over which she had any power.

Brian was the name of the king who first had her to wife, but they were then parted. He was the best-natured of all kings. He had his seat in Connaught, in Ireland; his brother's name was Wolf the quarrelsome, the greatest champion and warrior; Brian's foster-child's name was Kerthialfad. He was the son of King Kylfi, who had many wars with King Brian, and fled away out of the land before him, and became a hermit; but when King Brian went south on a pilgrimage, then he met King Kylfi, and then they were atoned, and King Brian took his son Kerthialfad to him, and loved him more than his own sons. He was then full grown when these things happened, and was the boldest of all men.

Duncan was the name of the first of King Brian's sons; the second was Margad; the third, Takt, whom we call Tann, he was the youngest of them; but the elder sons of King Brian were full grown, and the briskest of men.

Kormlada was not the mother of King Brian's

children, and so grim was she against King Brian after their parting, that she would gladly have him dead.

King Brian thrice forgave all his outlaws the same fault, but if they misbehaved themselves oftener, then he let them be judged by the law; and from this one may mark what a king he must have been.

Kormlada egged on her son Sigtrygg very much to kill King Brian, and she now sent him to Earl Sigurd to beg for help.

King Sigtrygg came before Yule to the Orkneys, and there, too, came Earl Gilli, as was written before.

The men were so placed that King Sigtrygg sat in a high seat in the middle, but on either side of the king sat one of the earls. The men of King Sigtrygg and and Earl Gilli sate on the inner side away from him, but on the outer side away from Earl Sigurd, sate Flosi and Thorstein, son of Hall of the Side, and the whole hall was full.

Now King Sigtrygg and Earl Gilli wished to hear of these tidings which had happened at the Burning, and so, also, what had befallen since.

Then Gunnar Lambi's son was got to tell the tale, and a stool was set for him to sit upon.

CHAPTER CLIV.

GUNNAR LAMBI'S SON'S SLAYING.

JUST at that very time Kari and Kolbein and David the white came to Hrossey unawares to all men. They went straightway up on land, but a few men watched their ship.

Kari and his fellows went straight to the Earl's homestead, and came to the hall about drinking time.

It so happened that just then Gunnar was telling the story of the Burning, but they were listening to him meanwhile outside. This was on Yule-day itself.

Now King Sigtrygg asked—

"How did Skarphedinn bear the Burning?"

"Well at first for a long time," said Gunnar, "but still the end of it was that he wept." And so he went on giving an unfair leaning in his story, but every now and then he laughed out loud.

Kari could not stand this, and then he ran in with his sword drawn, and sang this song—

"Men of might, in battle eager,
Boast of burning Njal's abode,
Have the Princes heard how sturdy
Seahorse racers sought revenge?

Hath not since, on foemen holding
High the shield's broad orb aloft,
All that wrong been fully wroken?
Raw flesh ravens got to tear."

So he ran in up the hall, and smote Gunnar Lambi's son on the neck with such a sharp blow, that his head spun off on to the board before the king and the earls, and the board was all one gore of blood, and the Earl's clothing too.

Earl Sigurd knew the man that had done the deed, and called out—

"Seize Kari and kill him."

Kari had been one of Earl Sigurd's bodyguard, and he was of all men most beloved by his friends; and no man stood up a whit more for the Earl's speech.

"Many would say, Lord," said Kari, "that I have done this deed on your behalf, to avenge your henchman."

Then Flosi said—"Kari hath not done this without a cause; he is in no atonement with us, and he only did what he had a right to do."

So Kari walked away, and there was no hue and cry after him. Kari fared to his ship, and his fellows with him. The weather was then good, and they sailed off at once south to Caithness, and went on shore at

Thraswick to the house of a worthy man whose name was Skeggi, and with him they stayed a very long while.

Those behind in the Orkneys cleansed the board, and bore out the dead man.

The Earl was told that they had set sail south for Scotland, and King Sigtrygg said—

"This was a mighty bold fellow, who dealt his stroke so stoutly, and never thought twice about it!"

Then Earl Sigurd answered—

"There is no man like Kari for dash and daring."

Now Flosi undertook to tell the story of the Burning, and he was fair to all; and therefore what he said was believed.

Then King Sigtrygg stirred in his business with Earl Sigurd, and bade him go to the war with him against King Brian.

The Earl was long steadfast, but the end of it was that he let the king have his way, but said he must have his mother's hand for his help, and be king in Ireland, if they slew Brian. But all his men besought Earl Sigurd not to go into the war, but it was all no good.

So they parted on the understanding that Earl Sigurd gave his word to go; but King Sigtrygg promised him his mother and the kingdom.

It was so settled that Earl Sigurd was to come with all his host to Dublin by Palm Sunday.

Then King Sigtrygg fared south to Ireland, and told his mother Kormlada that the Earl had undertaken to come, and also what he had pledged himself to grant him.

She shewed herself well pleased at that, but said they must gather greater force still.

Sigtrygg asked whence this was to be looked for?

She said there were two vikings lying off the west of Man; and that they had thirty ships, and, she went on, "they are men of such hardihood that nothing can withstand them. The one's name is Ospak, and the other's Brodir. Thou shalt fare to find them, and spare nothing to get them into thy quarrel, whatever price they ask."

Now King Sigtrygg fares and seeks the vikings, and found them lying outside off Man; King Sigtrygg brings forward his errand at once, but Brodir shrank from helping him until he, King Sigtrygg, promised him the kingdom and his mother, and they were to keep this such a secret that Earl Sigurd should know nothing about it; Brodir too was to come to Dublin on Palm Sunday.

So King Sigtrygg fared home to his mother, and told her how things stood.

After that those brothers, Ospak and Brodir, talked together, and then Brodir told Ospak all that he and Sigtrygg had spoken of, and bade him fare to battle with him against King Brian, and said he set much store on his going.

But Ospak said he would not fight against so good a king.

Then they were both wroth, and sundered their band at once. Ospak had ten ships and Brodir twenty.

Ospak was a heathen, and the wisest of all men. He laid his ships inside in a Sound, but Brodir lay outside him.

Brodir had been a Christian man and a mass-deacon by consecration, but he had thrown off his faith and become God's dastard, and now worshipped heathen fiends, and he was of all men most skilled in sorcery. He had that coat of mail on which no steel would bite. He was both tall and strong, and had such long locks that he tucked them under his belt. His hair was black.

CHAPTER CLV.

OF SIGNS AND WONDERS.

It so happened one night that a great din passed over Brodir and his men, so that they all woke, and sprang up and put on their clothes.

Along with that came a shower of boiling blood.

Then they covered themselves with their shields, but for all that many were scalded.

This wonder lasted all till day, and a man had died on board every ship.

Then they slept during the day, but the second night there was again a din, and again they all sprang up. Then swords leapt out of their sheaths, and axes and spears flew about in the air and fought.

The weapons pressed them so hard that they had to shield themselves, but still many were wounded, and again a man died out of every ship.

This wonder lasted all till day.

Then they slept again the day after.

But the third night there was a din of the same kind, and then ravens flew at them, and it seemed to them as though their beaks and claws were of iron.

The ravens pressed them so hard that they had to keep them off with their swords, and covered themselves with their shields, and so this went on again till day, and then another man had died in every ship.

Then they went to sleep first of all, but when Brodir woke up, he drew his breath painfully, and bade them put off the boat. "For," he said, "I will go to see Ospak."

Then he got into the boat and some men with him, but when he found Ospak he told him of the wonders which had befallen them, and bade him say what he thought they boded.

Ospak would not tell him before he pledged him peace, and Brodir promised him peace, but Ospak still shrank from telling him till night fell.

Then Ospak spoke and said—"When blood rained on you, therefore shall ye shed many men's blood, both of your own and others. But when ye heard a great din, then ye must have been shewn the crack of doom, and ye shall all die speedily. But when weapons fought against you, that must forbode a battle; but when ravens pressed you, that marks the devils which ye put faith in, and who will drag you all down to the pains of hell."

Then Brodir was so wroth that he could answer

never a word, but he went at once to his men, and made them lay his ships in a line across the Sound, and moor them by bearing their cables on shore at either end of the line, and meant to slay them all next morning.

Ospak saw all their plan, and then he vowed to take the true faith, and to go to King Brian, and follow him till his death-day.

Then he took that counsel to lay his ships in a line, and punt them along the shore with poles, and cut the cables of Brodir's ships. Then the ships of Brodir's men began to fall aboard of one another when they were all fast asleep; and so Ospak and his men got out of the firth, and so west to Ireland, and came to Connaught.

Then Ospak told King Brian all that he had learnt, and took baptism, and gave himself over into the king's hand.

After that King Brian made them gather force over all his realm, and the whole host was to come to Dublin in the week before Palm Sunday.

CHAPTER CLVI.

BRIAN'S BATTLE.

EARL Sigurd Hlodver's son busked him from the Orkneys, and Flosi offered to go with him.

The Earl would not have that; since he had his pilgrimage to fulfil.

Flosi offered fifteen men of his band to go on the voyage, and the Earl accepted them, but Flosi fared with Earl Gilli to the Southern Isles.

Thorstein, the son of Hall of the Side, went along with Earl Sigurd, and Hrafn the red, and Erling of Straumey.

He would not that Hareck should go, but said he would be sure to be the first to tell him the tidings of his voyage.

The Earl came with all his host on Palm Sunday to Dublin, and there too was come Brodir with all his host.

Brodir tried by sorcery how the fight would go, but the answer ran thus, that if the fight were on Good-Friday King Brian would fall but win the day; but if they fought before, they would all fall who were against him.

Then Brodir said that they must not fight before the Friday.

On the fifth day of the week a man rode up to Kormlada and her company on an apple-grey horse, and in his hand he held a halberd; he talked long with them.

King Brian came with all his host to the Burg, and on the Friday the host fared out of the Burg, and both armies were drawn up in array.

Brodir was on one wing of the battle, but King Sigtrygg on the other.

Earl Sigurd was in the mid battle.

Now it must be told of King Brian that he would not fight on the fast-day, and so a shieldburg* was thrown round him, and his host was drawn up in array in front of it.

Wolf the quarrelsome was on that wing of the battle against which Brodir stood; but on the other wing, where Sigtrygg stood against them, were Ospak and his sons.

But in mid battle was Kerthialfad, and before him the banners were borne.

Now the wings fall on one another, and there was a

* "Shieldburg," that is, a ring of men holding their shields locked together.

very hard fight. Brodir went through the host of the foe, and felled all the foremost that stood there, but no steel would bite on his mail.

Wolf the quarrelsome turned then to meet him, and thrust at him thrice so hard that Brodir fell before him at each thrust, and was well-nigh not getting on his feet again; but as soon as ever he found his feet, he fled away into the wood at once.

Earl Sigurd had a hard battle against Kerthialfad, and Kerthialfad came on so fast that he laid low all who were in the front rank, and he broke the array of Earl Sigurd right up to his banner, and slew the banner-bearer.

Then he got another man to bear the banner, and there was again a hard fight.

Kerthialfad smote this man too his death blow at once, and so on one after the other all who stood near him.

Then Earl Sigurd called on Thorstein the son of Hall of the Side, to bear the banner, and Thorstein was just about to lift the banner, but then Asmund the white said—

"Don't bear the banner! for all they who bear it get their death."

"Hrafn the red!" called out Earl Sigurd, "Bear thou the banner."

"Bear thine own devil thyself," answered Hrafn.

Then the Earl said—

"'Tis fittest that the beggar should bear the bag;" and with that he took the banner from the staff and put it under his cloak.

A little after Asmund the white was slain, and then the Earl was pierced through with a spear.

Ospak had gone through all the battle on his wing, he had been sore wounded, and lost both his sons ere King Sigtrygg fled before him.

Then flight broke out throughout all the host.

Thorstein Hall of the Side's son stood still while all the others fled, and tied his shoe-string. Then Kerthialfad asked why he ran not as the others.

"Because," said Thorstein, "I can't get home to-night, since I am at home out in Iceland."

Kerthialfad gave him peace.

Hrafn the red was chased out into a certain river; he thought he saw there the pains of hell down below him, and he thought the devils wanted to drag him to them.

Then Hrafn said—

"Thy dog,* Apostle Peter! hath run twice to Rome,

* "Thy dog," etc. Meaning that he would go a third time on a pilgrimage to Rome if St. Peter helped him out of this strait.

and he would run the third time if thou gavest him leave."

Then the devils let him loose, and Hrafn got across the river.

Now Brodir saw that King Brian's men were chasing the fleers, and that there were few men by the shieldburg.

Then he rushed out of the wood, and broke through the shieldburg, and hewed at the king.

The lad Takt threw his arm in the way, and the stroke took it off and the king's head too, but the king's blood came on the lad's stump, and the stump was healed by it on the spot.

Then Brodir called out with a loud voice—

"Now let man tell man that Brodir felled Brian."

Then men ran after those who were chasing the fleers, and they were told that King Brian had fallen, and then they turned back straightway, both Wolf the quarrelsome and Kerthialfad.

Then they threw a ring round Brodir and his men, and threw branches of trees upon them, and so Brodir was taken alive.

Wolf the quarrelsome cut open his belly, and led him round and round the trunk of a tree, and so wound all his entrails out of him, and he did not die before they were all drawn out of him.

Brodir's men were slain to a man.

After that they took King Brian's body and laid it out. The king's head had grown fast to the trunk.

Fifteen men of the Burners fell in Brian's battle, and there, too, fell Halldor the son of Gudmund the powerful, and Erling of Straumey.

On Good Friday that event happened in Caithness that a man whose name was Daurrud went out. He saw folk riding twelve together to a bower, and there they were all lost to his sight. He went to that bower and looked in through a window slit that was in it, and saw that there were women inside, and they had set up a loom. Men's heads were the weights, but men's entrails were the warp and weft, a sword was the shuttle, and the reels were arrows.

They sang these songs, and he learnt them by heart—

THE WOOF OF WAR.

"See! warp is stretched
For warriors' fall,
Lo! weft in loom
'Tis wet with blood;
Now fight foreboding,
'Neath friends' swift fingers,
Our gray woof waxeth
With war's alarms,
Our warp bloodred,
Our weft corseblue.

"This woof is y-woven
With entrails of men,
This warp is hardweighted
With heads of the slain,
Spears blood-besprinkled
For spindles we use,
Our loom ironbound,
And arrows our reels;
With swords for our shuttles
This war-woof we work;
So weave we, weird sisters,
Our warwinning woof.

"Now War-winner walketh
To weave in her turn,
Now Swordswinger steppeth,
Now Swiftstroke, now Storm;
When they speed the shuttle
How spear-heads shall flash!
Shields crash, and helmgnawer *
On harness bite hard!

"Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof,
Woof erst for king youthful
Foredoomed as his own,
Forth now we will ride,
Then through the ranks rushing
Be busy where friends
Blows blithe give and take.

"* Helmgnawer," the sword that bites helmets.

"Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof,
After that let us steadfastly
Stand by the brave king;
Then men shall mark mournful
Their shields red with gore,
How Swordstroke and Spearthrust
Stood stout by the prince.

"Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof;
When sword-bearing rovers
To banners rush on,
Mind, maidens, we spare not
One life in the fray!
We corse-choosing sisters
Have charge of the slain.

"Now new-coming nations
That island shall rule,
Who on outlying headlands
Abode ere the fight;
I say that King mighty
To death now is done,
Now low before spearpoint
That Earl bows his head.

"Soon over all Ersemen
Sharp sorrow shall fall,
That woe to those warriors
Shall wane nevermore;

Our woof now is woven,
Now battle-field waste,
Oër land and oër water
War tidings shall leap.

"Now surely 'tis gruesome
To gaze all around,
When bloodred through heaven
Drives cloudrack oër head;
Air soon shall be deep hued
With dying men's blood
When this our spaedom
Comes speedy to pass.

"So cheerily chant we
Charms for the young king,
Come maidens lift loudly
His warwinning lay;
Let him who now listens
Learn well with his ears,
And gladden brave swordsmen
With bursts of war's song."

"Now mount we our horses,
Now bare we our brands,
Now haste we hard, maidens,
Hence far, far, away."

Then they plucked down the woof and tore it asunder, and each kept what she had hold of.

Now Daurrud goes away from the slit, and home;

but they got on their steeds and rode six to the south, and the other six to the north.

A like event befell Brand Gneisti's son in the Faroe Isles.

At Swinefell, in Iceland, blood came on the priest's stole on Good Friday, so that he had to put it off.

At Thvattwater the priest thought he saw on Good Friday a long deep of the sea hard by the altar, and there he saw many awful sights, and it was long ere he could sing the prayers.

This event happened in the Orkneys, that Hareck thought he saw Earl Sigurd, and some men with him. Then Hareck took his horse and rode to meet the Earl. Men saw that they met and rode under a brae, but they were never seen again, and not a scrap was ever found of Hareck.

Earl Gilli in the Southern Isles dreamed that a man came to him and said his name was Hostfinn, and told him he was come from Ireland.

The Earl thought he asked him for tidings thence, and then he sang this song:

"I have been where warriors wrestled,
High in Erin sang the sword,
Boss to boss met many bucklers,
Steel rung sharp on rattling helm;

I can tell of all their struggle;
Sigurd fell in flight of spears;
Brian fell, but kept his kingdom
Ere he lost one drop of blood."

Those two, Flosi and the Earl, talked much of this dream. A week after, Hrafn the red came thither, and told them all the tidings of Brian's battle, the fall of the king, and of Earl Sigurd, and Brodir, and all the Vikings.

"What," said Flosi, "hast thou to tell me of my men?"

"They all fell there," says Hrafn, "but thy brother-in-law Thorstein took peace from Kerthialfad, and is now with him."

Flosi told the Earl that he would now go away, "for we have our pilgrimage south to fulfil."

The Earl bade him go as he wished, and gave him a ship and all else that he needed, and much silver.

Then they sailed to Wales, and stayed there a while.

CHAPTER CLVII.

THE SLAYING OF KOL THORSTEIN'S SON.

KARI Solmund's son told master Skeggi that he wished he would get him a ship. So master Skeggi gave Kari a long-ship, fully trimmed and manned, and on board it went Kari, and David the white, and Kolbein the black.

Now Kari and his fellows sailed south through Scotland's Firths, and there they found men from the Southern isles. They told Kari the tidings from Ireland, and also that Flosi was gone to Wales, and his men with him.

But when Kari heard that, he told his messmates that he would hold on south to Wales, to fall in with Flosi and his band. So he bade them then to part from his company, if they liked it better, and said that he would not wish to beguile any man into mischief, because he thought he had not yet had revenge enough on Flosi and his band.

All chose to go with him; and then he sails south to Wales, and there they lay in hiding in a creek out of the way.

That morning Kol Thorstein's son went into the town to buy silver. He of all the Burners had used the bitterest words. Kol had talked much with a mighty dame, and he had so knocked the nail on the head, that it was all but fixed that he was to have her, and settle down there.

That same morning Kari went also into the town. He came where Kol was telling the silver.

Kari knew him at once, and ran at him with his drawn sword and smote him on the neck; but he still went on telling the silver, and his head counted "ten" just as it spun off the body.

Then Kari said—

"Go and tell this to Flosi, that Kari Solmund's son hath slain Kol Thorstein's son. I give notice of this slaying as done by my hand."

Then Kari went to his ship, and told his shipmates of the manslaughter.

Then they sailed north to Beruwick, and laid up their ship, and fared up into Whitherne in Scotland, and were with Earl Malcolm that year.

But when Flosi heard of Kol's slaying, he laid out his body, and bestowed much money on his burial.

Flosi never uttered any wrathful words against Kari.

Thence Flosi fared south across the sea and began his pilgrimage, and went on south, and did not stop till he came to Rome. There he got so great honour that he took absolution from the Pope himself, and for that he gave a great sum of money.

Then he fared back again by the east road, and stayed long in towns, and went in before mighty men, and had from them great honour.

He was in Norway the winter after, and was with Earl Eric till he was ready to sail, and the Earl gave him much meal, and many other men behaved handsomely to him.

Now he sailed out to Iceland, and ran into Hornfirth, and thence fared home to Swinefell. He had then fulfilled all the terms of his atonement, both in fines and foreign travel.

CHAPTER CLVIII.

OF FLOSI AND KARI.

Now it is to be told of Kari that the summer after he went down to his ship and sailed south across the sea, and began his pilgrimage in Normandy, and so went south and got absolution and fared back by the western way,

and took his ship again in Normandy, and sailed in her north across the sea to Dover in England.

Thence he sailed west, round Wales, and so north, through Scotland's Firths, and did not stay his course till he came to Thraswick in Caithness, to master Skeggi's house.

There he gave over the ship of burden to Kolbein and David, and Kolbein sailed in that ship to Norway, but David stayed behind in the Fair Isle.

Kari was that winter in Caithness. In this winter his housewife died out in Iceland.

The next summer Kari busked him for Iceland. Skeggi gave him a ship of burden, and there were eighteen of them on board her.

They were rather late "boun," but still they put to sea, and had a long passage, but at last they made Ingolf's Head. There their ship was dashed all to pieces, but the men's lives were saved. Then, too, a gale of wind came on them.

Now they ask Kari what counsel was to be taken; but he said their best plan was to go to Swinefell and put Flosi's manhood to the proof.

So they went right up to Swinefell in the storm. Flosi was in the sitting-room. He knew Kari as soon

as ever he came into the room, and sprang up to meet him, and kissed him, and sate him down in the high-seat by his side.

Flosi asked Kari to be there that winter, and Kari took his offer. Then they were atoned with a full atonement.

Then Flosi gave away his brother's daughter Hildigunna, whom Hauskuld the priest of Whiteness had had to wife to Kari, and they dwelt first of all at Broad-water.

Men say that the end of Flosi's life was, that he fared abroad, when he had grown old, to seek for timber to build him a hall; and he was in Norway that winter, but the next summer he was late "boun;" and men told him that his ship was not seaworthy.

Flosi said she was quite good enough for an old and death-doomed man, and bore his goods on shipboard and put out to sea. But of that ship no tidings were ever heard.

These were the children of Kari Solmund's son and Helga Njal's daughter—Thorgerda and Ragneida, Valgerda, and Thord who was burnt in Njal's house. But the children of Hildigunna and Kari, were these, Starkad, and Thord, and Flosi.

The son of Burning-Flosi was Kolbein, who has been the most famous man of any of that stock.

And here we end the STORY of BURNT NJAL.

APPENDIX.

THE VIKINGS.

AMONG all tribes that can find an outlet on the sea, piracy at one time or other has been an honourable calling. It was so in ancient Greece, as the reader of Thucydides knows, and unless the modern Greeks are much maligned, the waters of the Ægean roll over many a dark deed. It was so not very long ago, and perhaps is so still, on the Spanish Main, and it is so to this day in Borneo, in China, and along the Barbary coast. But no race of the ancient or modern world have ever taken to the sea with such heartiness as the Northmen. The great cause which filled the waters of Western Europe with their barks was that consolidation and centralization of the kingly power all over Europe which followed after the days of Charlemagne, and which put a stop to those great invasions and migrations by land which had lasted for centuries. Before that time the north and east of Europe, pressed from behind by other nationalities,

and growing straitened within their own bounds, threw off from time to time bands of emigrants which gathered force as they slowly marched along until they appeared in the west as a fresh wave of the barbarian flood. As soon as the west, recruited from the very source whence the invaders came, had gained strength enough to set them at defiance, which happened in the time of Charlemagne, these invasions by land ceased after a series of bloody defeats, and the north had to look for another outlet for the force which it was unable to support at home. Nor was the north itself slow to follow Charlemagne's example. Harold Fairhair, no inapt disciple of the great emperor, subdued the petty kings in Norway one after another, and made himself supreme king. At the same time he invaded the rights of the old freeman, and by taxes and tolls laid on his allodial holding, drove him into exile. We have thus the old outlet cut off and a new cause for emigration added. No doubt the Northmen even then had long been used to struggle with the sea, and searoving was the calling of the brave, but the two causes we have named gave it a great impulse just at the beginning of the tenth century, and many a freeman who would have joined the host of some famous leader by land, or have lived on a little king at home, now sought the waves as a birth-

right of which no king could rob him. Either alone, or as the follower of some sea-king, whose realm was the sea's wide wastes, he went out year after year, and thus won fame and wealth. The name given to this pursuit was "Víking," a word which is no way akin to king. It is derived from "Vík," a bay or creek, because these sea-rovers lay moored in bays and creeks on the look-out for merchant ships; the "ing" is a well-known ending, meaning, in this case, occupation or calling. Such a sea-rover was called "Víkingr," * and at one time or other in his life almost every man of note in the North had taken to the sea and lived a Viking life. Where the calling was so common, it may easily be believed that there were Vikings of all kinds. There were the hardhearted robbers who spared neither sex nor age; men who answered to the pirates of the Spanish Main, and who were the scourge of every sea and the wasters of every land. It is of such Vikings that the words of Landnáma are true, if they are true at all,

* In later times the word is used for any robber. Thus in a Biblical paraphrase, "Þessum vansignaða Víkingi," "This accursed robber," *i.e.*, "Goliath;" and again, "Sem hin vándi Víkingr gat at líta Davíd," "as soon as this wicked robber got to see David." So also in Alexander 122, "Nú er at segja frá Besso, þeim vánda Víkingi, er svikit hafði Darium," "Now we must tell of Bessus, that wicked robber who had betrayed Darius."

when we are told that Oliver "bairncarle" was so called because he would not, when he was a Viking, let children be tossed about from spearpoint to spearpoint, "as was then Vikings' wont."* But there were other and better Vikings—such was Thorwald Kodran's son the far-farer, who, sprung from a good family in Iceland, took service with Sweyn Forkbeard, son of Harold Gorm's son, king of Denmark. "At that time," says the Saga, "Sweyn was not on Danish land, for king Harold would not acknowledge his sonship; so he lay long out a-sea-roving, and was called 'king' by his crew, as was Vikings' wont. But when Thorwald came to King Sweyn, he made him welcome, and Thorwald became his man, and was with him some summers a-sea-roving in the western main. Thorwald had not long been with King Sweyn

* It is not unlikely that Oliver was called "bairncarle" from the number of his children, in which case the explanation above would fall to the ground. Besides, as Guðbrandr Vigfússon well points out, "Um Tímatal," p. 287, there is something mythic in this story of the origin of Oliver's nickname, for such atrocities are utterly unsupported by any historical proof. The Vikings were wild enough without them, but as they grew tamer with the rest of the world, then it was that these tales of deeds of horror, unheard of in later times, were spread about of the older Vikings who figure in mythical Sagas. The Icelandic Saga of Frithiof the daring contains a good instance of this. Of him, a thoroughly unhistorical person, it is said that he was called Helthiof "when he tossed small bairns on his spear-point."

ere the king set more store by him than by all his other men and friends, for Thorwald was a great man for good counsel, manifesting to every man his worth and foresight, strong in body and bold of heart, keen in combat, and quick in battle, mild in temper and bountiful of money, and proved for trustiness and gentleness; beloved and befriended by all the king's followers, and not unworthily, for even then, as a heathen, he showed his justice before that of other heathens, in so much that all his share of plunder which he got on their cruises he bestowed on the needy, and in ransoming captives, and thus he helped many who were in bad case. But if captives fell to his share he sent them back again to their fathers or friends, just as he did those whom he had set free by paying their ransom. Now, inasmuch as he was bolder in battle than others of the king's band, so they passed a law that he was to have the first choice of all their spoil, but he made this use of that honour that he chose the sons of great men, or those things else which those who had lost them set most store by, but which his messmates cared least to give up, and sent them afterwards to those to whom they had belonged; for that sake all those loved him who had been plundered by Sweyn's men, and spread abroad his praise; and by this means he easily set free his own men though

they might be seized by their foes, and not least of all, he set free King Sweyn himself. It so fell out that once on a time King Sweyn harried in Wales, and at first he won the victory and got great booty, but when he went far up into the land away from his ships, then such a host of horsemen came against him that he could not withstand them. So King Sweyn was there taken captive, bound, and cast into a dungeon, and Thorwald Kodran's son along with him, and many other men of worth and rank. Next day came a mighty leader to the dark dungeon, with a great company, to take Thorwald out of the prison, for a little while before he had set free the sons of this very leader, who had been taken captive, and sent them home free to their father. The leader bade Thorwald to come out and go away a free man; but Thorwald swore that he would never go thence alive unless King Sweyn were loosed and set free with all his men. The leader did this at once for his sake, as King Sweyn himself bore witness afterwards when he sat at a splendid feast with two other kings. And when the meat was set on the board, then one lord said that there would never again be a board so nobly filled as that, when three such mighty kings ate out of one dish. Then answers King Sweyn, with a smile, 'I will find that stranger yeoman's son, who alone has in himself, if

right worth be set on it, not one whit less glory and true honour than all we three kings.' Now there was much mirth at that in the hall, and all asked, with a laugh, where or what sort of man this might be, of whom he tells such mighty fame? He answers—'This man of whom I speak is as wise as it befits a prudent king to be, as strong and stouthearted as the most dauntless Baresark, and as good and gentle-hearted as the most virtuous sage.' After that he told them of Thorwald that story which was written above, and how he set the king free for the sake of his friendship and for the sake of many other praiseworthy deeds."*

Such is the account given of the best of Vikings, who was also one of the first converts to Christianity in Iceland. There is no reason to doubt the facts, and the whole story is a remarkable proof of the way in which the whole North, good and bad alike, took to the sea. So, too, in our Saga the peerless Gunnar went a-sea-roving to win fame and wealth, and behaved himself like a generous foe to those whom he worsted. But by no one has the Viking of the good type been so well described as by Tegnèr in his immortal Frithiof's Saga. The following translation of one of the finest passages in that

* Biskupa Sögur, Þáttr af Þorvaldi víðförla, p. 36, foll. Kph. 1858.

poem is laid before the reader in the metre of the original as containing the most perfect summary of the rights and duties of the generous Viking; but the whole work is well worth consulting for the beautiful way in which the author has caught the true spirit of the early North.

"So he hovered about as a hawk on the wing, oër the sea-wastes his war-gallies rode,
But for champions on board he wrote statutes and laws; now list to his sea-roving code.

"Throw no awning* o'er ship, never slumber in house, within doors stand an enemies crew,
On his shield, sword in hand, let a Viking take rest, let his awning be heaven, the blue.

"Short haft hath the hammer of conquering Thor, but an ell† long the sword that Frey swayed;
'Tis enough; hast thou heart, stand up close to thy foe, and too short will not then be thy blade.

"When the wind bloweth strong hoist thy sail to the top, 'tis joyous in storm not to flinch;
Keep her full! keep her full! none but cowards strike sail, sooner founder than take in an inch.

* It was usual for seamen to throw an awning over their ships between the raised poop (lypting) and the prow. These ships were half-decked, and the awning was thrown over them in port to shelter the crew at night. A ship surprised by an enemy with her awning up would be taken at great disadvantage. Comp. Orkn. Saga, new Ed., vol. i., p. 400-1.

† It must be remembered that the old northern ell was probably only a foot and a half, and certainly not more than two feet in length.

" Maids are safe upon land, they may not come on board ; were she Freyja, of maiden beware,
For that dimple on cheek is a pitfall for thee, and those fair flowing tresses a snare.

" Wine is Valfather's drink and a bout is allowed ; if thy head thou canst keep, never fear ;
Whoso stumbles on land can stand up, but to Ran,* to the slumberous, stumblest thou here.

" If a chapman sail by, his ship thou shalt shield, but the weak must not tribute withhold ;
Thou art lord on thy wave, he is slave of his gain, and thy steel is as good as his gold.

" Share spoil upon deck by hazard and lot ; how the lot falleth never repine ;
But the sea-king himself, never casteth the dice, his share is the glory, not thine.

" Now Vikings are sighted, then strife comes and blows, under shields soon the warm blood is spilt ;
If thou yieldest one step, take thy leave of our band. 'Tis the law, and so do as thou wilt.

" Hast thou won, be content ; he that prayeth for peace, hath no sword, is no longer thy foe ;
Prayer is Valhalla's child, hear the voice of the weak, a niddering he who says ' No.'

* Ran, a sea-goddess, Ægir's wife, who caught in her net all those who were drowned at sea.

"Wounds are Vikings' delight, and they set off their man, on forehead and bosom when shown;
Let them bleed, only bind them when day comes again, not sooner, wilt thou be our own."*

Such was the Viking in heathen time when all were Vikings; when the sons and heirs of kings spent the fury of their hot youth, year after year, in piratical expeditions; when Eric Bloodaxe, Harold Fairhair's darling son, went east and west and north, seeking for fame and spoil; when Olaf Tryggvi's son, afterward so pious a Christian, wasted Ireland, Scotland, and England with repeated onslaughts, and at last was only bought off by Ethelred the unready with a heavy sum;† and when following the example of these mighty leaders, the sons of earls and thanes, simple freemen and yeomen, all alike sought the sea as their annual harvest field, and ploughed its wastes every summer with their keels, so reaping, year after year, a fresh crop of gain and glory.

* See Tegnèrs Frithiofs Sage xv. Vikingabalk. The articles in this sea-roving code are rather taken from the Saga of Half and his Men. (Comp. Fornald. Sög. II. p. 25 foll.), than from that of Frithiof the bold. (Comp. the same vol., p. 63 foll.)

† Anglo Sax. chron. ad an. 994. The sum was 16,000 pounds of gold. Olaf had been baptized at the Scilly Isles shortly before, and on the occasion of this peacemaking, he was confirmed, King Ethelred standing his sponsor. Comp. Maurer Bekehrung des N. Stammes, I. 276-77.

With the change of faith came a change of feeling in those whose minds gave a turn to the temper of the age, and sea-roving began to be looked on as a wicked calling. Thus we find King Olaf Tryggvi's son, who had been so bold a rover not many years before, sternly rebuking Thangbrand—whom we know in our Saga as the king's missionary to Iceland—for supporting himself and his men by piratical means. "Thou goest out a-roving like heathen Vikings, and feedest thyself and others by plunder and robbery. Thou! a priest, who oughtest to serve God alone, know therefore that thou shalt loose all my favour and leave my realm." It was as a punishment for these wicked courses, which were the more unpardonable because they were practised within the realm, and because Thangbrand was in holy orders, that the perilous journey to convert the Icelanders was laid on the offender by the king. Our Saga tells us how thoroughly Thangbrand's missionary efforts rested on his good sword and strength of arm, and how stubborn he found the Icelanders against that kind of proselytism. So also the Danish king Canute, Sweyn's son, speaks thus to one of his followers who wished to undertake a roving cruise—"There thou takest an evil counsel when thou makest thyself a Viking, that is the heathens' wont, and that I will forbid thee."

But in spite of these efforts to subdue it, the old roving spirit still held its own, and at last found an excuse for its existence when it claimed to be lawful if practised against the heathen. Thus, so late as the year 1152, when Earl Rognvald of Orkney undertook his famous expedition to the Holy Land, we find the following account of his falling in with and boarding and capturing a mighty ship called a Dromedary, which belonged to the Saracens, but which he attacked in the first place not really knowing to what nation it belonged, just as one of the old Vikings would have done.

"Nothing is told of the voyage of the earl and his ships before they came south off Sarkland, and lay in the neighbourhood of Sardinia, and knew not what land they were near. The weather had turned out in this wise, that a great calm set in and mists and sea-fogs, and they saw scarcely at all from their ships, and so they made little way. One morning it happened that the mist lifted; men stood up and looked about them, and they saw two islets; and when they looked for the islets the second time, then one of the islets was gone. They told this to the earl; he began to say: 'That can have been no islets, that must be ships which men have out here in this part of the world, which they call dromedaries; those are ships big as holms to look on; but

there where the other dromedary lay a breeze must have come down on the sea, and they must have sailed away, but these must be men of some mark.' After that the earl lets them call to him the bishop and all the shipmasters; then he began to say: 'I call you together for this, lord bishop and Erling my kinsman; see ye any scheme or chance of ours that we may win victory in some way over those who are on yonder dromedary?' The bishop answers: 'Hard, I guess, will it be for you to run your long-ships under the dromedary, for ye will have no better way of boarding than by grappling the bulwarks with a long boarding pike, but they will have brimstone and boiling pitch to throw under your feet and over your heads; ye may see, earl, so wise as ye are, that it is the greatest rashness to lay one's self and one's men in such risk.' Then Erling began to speak. 'Lord bishop,' he says, 'likely it is that ye are able to see this plainly that there will be little hope of victory in rowing against them; but somehow it seems to me that though we try to run under the dromedary, so methinks it will be that the greatest weight of weapons will fall beyond our ships if we hug her close, broadside to broadside, but if it be not so, then we can put off from them quickly, for they will not chase us in the dromedary.' The earl began to say: 'That is spoken like a man and

quite to my mind; I will now make that clear to the shipmasters and all the crews, that each man shall busk him in his room, and arm himself as he best can; after that we will row up to them, but if they are Christian chapmen, then it will be in our power to make peace with them; but if they are heathen, as I feel sure they are, then Almighty God will yield us that mercy that we may win the victory over them. But of the war-spoil which we get there, we shall give the fiftieth penny to poor men.' After that men got out their arms and heightened the bulwarks of their ships, and made themselves ready according to the means which they had at hand; the earl settles where each of his ships should run in; and then they made an onslaught on her by rowing, and pulled up to her as briskly as they could.

"But when those who were on board the dromedary saw that ships were rowing up to them, and that men meant to make an onslaught on them, they took silken stuffs and costly goods and hung them out on the bulwarks, and then made great shoutings and hailings; and it seemed to the earl's men as though they dared the Northmen to come on against them. Earl Rognvald laid his ship aft alongside the dromedary on the starboard, but Erling aft too on the larboard. John and Aslak, they laid their ships forward each on his own

board, but the others amidships on both boards, and all the ships hugged her close, broadside to broadside. And when they came under the dromedary, her sides were so high out the water that they could not reach up with their weapons, but they [the foe] poured down blazing brimstone and flaming pitch over them; and it was as Erling guessed it would be, that the greatest weight of weapons fell out beyond the ships, and they had no need to shield themselves on that side. And when they made no way with their onslaught, the bishop shoved his ship off and two others, and they picked out and sent thither their bowmen, and they lay within shot, and shot thence at the dromedary, and then that onslaught was the hardest that was made; then those [on board the dromedary] got under cover, but thought little about what those were doing who had laid their ships under the dromedary. Earl Rognvald called out then to his men that they should take their axes and hew asunder the broadside of the dromedary in the parts where she was least iron-bound. But when the men in the other ships saw what the earl's men were about, they also took the like counsel. Now where Erling and his men had laid their ship a great anchor hung on the dromedary, and the fluke was hung by the crook over the bulwark, but the stock pointed down to Erling's

ship. Audun the red was the name of Erling's bowman; he was lifted up on the anchor-stock, but after that he hauled up to him other men, so that they stood as thick as ever they could on the stock, and thence hewed at the sides as they best could, and that hewing was by far the highest up. And when they had hewn such a large door that they could go into the dromedary, they made ready to board, and the earl and his men got into the lower hold, but Erling and his men into the upper. And when both their bands had come up on the ship, there was a fight both great and hard. On board the dromedary were Saracens, what we call Mahomet's unbelievers. There were many blackamoors, and they made the hardest struggle. Erling got there a great wound on his neck near his shoulders as he sprang up into the dromedary; that healed so ill, that he bore his head on one side ever after; that was why he was called wryneck. And when they met, Earl Rognvald and Erling, the Saracens gave way before them and ran to the forepart of the ship, but the earl's men then boarded her one after another; then there were more of them, and they pressed the enemy hard. They saw that on board the dromedary was that one man who was both taller and fairer than the others; the Northmen held it to be the truth that that man must be their chief. Earl

Rognvald said that they should not turn their weapons against him if they could take him in any other way; then they hemmed him in and bore him down with their shields, and so he was taken, and afterwards carried to the bishop's ship, and few men with him; but every other man's child they slew, and got much goods and many costly things. When they had ended the greatest part of their toil, then they sate down and rested themselves. Then the earl sang this :—

'Famous in victorious glory,
Erling, brave in battle, went
'Gainst the galleon, tree of spears,
When our banners dripped with blood;
Low we laid the swarthy champions,
Blood of foemen then was shed
Far and wide, and soldiers brave
Died their keen-edged faulchions red.'

"And again he sang—

'We make up our minds to win
The galleon, slaughter this I call;
At early dawn the warrior crew
Reddened all their blades in gore;
North and from the north the lady
Of this shower of spears will hear
Up to Nerbon; from our people
Foemen suffered life-loss sad.'

"Men spoke of these tidings which had happened there, and then each spoke of what he thought he had

seen; and men talked about who had been the first to board the ship, and could not agree about it. Then some said that it was foolish that they should not all have one story about these great tidings; and the end of it was that they agreed that Earl Rognvald should settle the dispute; and then they should all back what he said. Then the earl sang:—

'First upon the gloomy galleon
Ruddy Audun went with eager
Daring, and the warrior dauntless,
Soon dashed on to seize the spoil;
There at last we reached to redden
Weapons in our foemen's blood;
Mankind's God hath ruled it so;
On the planks fell corses black.'

"When they had stripped the dromedary, they put fire into her and burned her; and when that tall man whom they had made captive saw that, he was much stirred, and changed colour, and could not hold himself still. But though they tried to make him speak, he said never a word, and made no manner of sign, nor did he pay any heed to them whether they promised him good or ill. But when the dromedary began to blaze, they saw as though a flaming wave ran down into the sea, that moved the captive man much. They were quite sure then that they had looked for the goods carelessly, and now the

metal had melted in the heat of the fire, whether it were gold or silver. Earl Rognvald and his men sailed thence south under Sarkland, and lay under a burg of Sarkland, and made a seven nights' truce with the townsmen, and had dealings with them, and sold them silver and other goods. No man would buy the tall man. And after that the earl gave him leave to go away, and four men with him. He came down the next morning with a train of men, and told them that he was a prince of Sarkland, and had been driven away to sea thence with the dromedary and all the goods that were aboard her; he said too he thought that worst of all that they burnt the dromedary, and made such waste of that great wealth that it was of no use to any one. 'But now I have great power over your business here, and now ye shall have the greatest good from me for having spared my life, and treated me with such honour as ye could, but I would be very willing that we saw each other never again; and so now live safe and sound and well.' After that he rode up the country, but Earl Rognvald sailed thence south to Crete, and lay there in very foul weather."*

Who is there on reading this stirring story that is not reminded of Drake, Hawkins, and Cavendish, those sea-dogs of Elizabeth's days, laying their little

* Orkn. Saga. New ed. vol. i. pp. 359-69.

ships aboard great galleons and carracks, and hugging them broadside to broadside, as Earl Rognvald did the Dromedary, and thus, winning wealth and fame by private war on the King of Spain, having, as old Fuller says, a clear case "in sea-divinity," where "few are such infidels as not to believe doctrines which make for their own profit."

But lest any should say that Earl Rognvald's exploit against the Dromedary was not a proof that the old Viking spirit still existed, we have only to turn to the same Orkney Saga farther on, and read what we hear of the deeds of one who was as thorough a Viking as Rolf Ganger, or any of the old heathens. This was the famous Sweyn Asleif's son of Gairsay in the Orkneys, who was long the terror of the western seas. In the year 1171, long after the death of Earl Rognvald, which happened in 1158, Sweyn, who had been one of his adherents, led the life described in the Saga as follows:—

"When Hacon, Earl Harold's son, was but a few winter's old, Sweyn Asleif's son offered to take him as his foster-child, and he was bred up there, and as soon as ever he was so far fit that he could go about with other men, then Sweyn had him away with him a-searoving every summer, and tried to honour him in everything. It was Sweyn's wont at that time, that he sate

through the winter at home in Gairsay, and there he kept always about him eighty men at his own cost. He had so great a drinking-hall, there was not another as great in all the Orkneys. Sweyn had in the spring hard work, and made them lay down very much seed, and looked much after it himself. But when that toil was ended, he fared away every spring on a viking-voyage, and harried about among the Southern isles and Ireland, and came home after midsummer. That he called spring-viking. Then he was at home until the cornfields were reaped down, and the grain seen to and stored. Then he fared away on a viking-voyage, and then he did not come home till the winter was one month off, and that he called his autumn-viking.

"These tidings happened once on a time, that Sweyn Asleif's son fared away on his spring-cruise, then Hacon Earl Harold's son fared with him; and they had five ships with oars, and all of them large. They harried about among the Southern isles. Then the folk was so scared at him in the Southern isles, that men hid all their goods and chattels in the earth or in piles of rocks. Sweyn sailed as far south as Man, and got ill off for money. Thence they sailed out under Ireland and harried there. But when they came about south under Dublin, then two keels sailed there from off the main,

which had come from England, and meant to steer for Dublin; they were laden with English cloth and great store of goods was aboard them. Sweyn and his men pulled up to the keels and offered them battle. Little came of the defence of the Englishmen, and there they robbed them of every penny which was aboard the keels, save that the Englishmen kept their wearing apparel and some food, and went on their way afterwards with their keels, but Sweyn and his men fared to the Southern isles and shared their war-spoil. 'They sailed from the west with great pomp. They did this as a glory for themselves when they lay in harbours, that they threw awnings of English cloth over their ships. But when they sailed into the Orkneys, they sewed the cloth on the fore-part of the sails, so that it looked in that wise as though the sails were made altogether of broadcloth. This they called "the broadcloth cruise." Sweyn fared home to his house in Gairsay. He had taken from the keels much wine and English mead. Now when Sweyn had been at home a short while, he bade to him Earl Harold and made a worthy feast against his coming. When Earl Harold was at the feast, there was much talk amongst them of Sweyn's good cheer. The Earl spoke and said:—'This I would now, Sweyn, that thou wouldest lay aside thy sea-rovings; 'tis good

now to drive home with a whole wain ; but thou knowest this, that thou hast long maintained thyself and thy men by sea-roving, but so it fares with most men who live by unfair means, that they lose their lives in strife, if they do not break themselves from it.' Then Sweyn answered and looked to the Earl, and spoke with a smile, and said thus:—'Well spoken is this, lord, and friendly spoken, and it will be good to take a bit of good counsel from you ; but some men lay that to your door, that ye too are men of little fairness.' The Earl answered :—'I shall have to answer for my share, but a gossipping tongue drives me to say what I do.' Sweyn said :—'Good, no doubt, drives you to it, lord ; and so it shall be, that I will leave off sea-roving, for I find that I am growing old, and strength lessens much in drenching seas and warfare; now I will go out on my autumn-cruise, and I would that it might be with no less glory than the spring-cruise was; but after that my warfaring shall be over.' The Earl answers :—'Tis hard to see, messmate, whether death or lasting luck will come first.' After that they dropped talking about it. Earl Harold fared away from the feast, and was led out with fitting gifts ; so he and Sweyn parted with great love-tokens.

"A little after Sweyn busks him for his roving cruise ; he had seven long-ships and all great. Hacon, Earl

Harold's son, went along with Sweyn on his voyage. They held on their course first to the Southern isles, and got there little war-spoil; thence they fared out under Ireland, and harried there far and wide. They fared so far south as Dublin, and came upon them there very suddenly, so that the townsmen were not ware of them before they had got into the town. They took there much goods. They made prisoners there those men who were rulers there in the town. The upshot of their business was that they gave the town up into Sweyn's power, and agreed to pay as great a ransom as he chose to lay upon them. Sweyn was also to hold the town with his men and to have rule over it. The Dublin men swear an oath to do this. They fared to their ships at even, but next morning Sweyn was to come into the town, and take the ransom, place his men about the town, and take hostages from the townsmen. Now it must be told of what happened in the town during the night. The men of good counsel who were in the town held a meeting among themselves, and talked over the straits which had befallen them; it seemed to them hard to let their town come into the power of the Orkneyingers, and worst of all of that man whom they knew to be the greatest robber in the western lands. So they agreed amongst themselves that they would cheat Sweyn if they

might. They took this counsel, that they dug great trenches before the burg-gate on the inside, and in many other places between the houses where it was meant that Sweyn and his men should pass, but men lay in wait there in the houses hard by with weapons. They laid planks over the trenches, so that they should fall down as soon as ever a man's weight comes on them. After that they strewed straw on the planks so that the trenches might not be seen, and so bided the morrow.

"On the morning after Sweyn and his men arose and put on their arms; after that they went to the town, and when they came inside about the burg-gate the Dublin men made a lane from the burg-gate right to the trenches. Sweyn and his men saw not what they were doing and ran into the trenches. The townsmen they ran straightway to hold the burg-gate, but some to the trenches, and brought their arms to bear on Sweyn and his men. It was unhandy for them to make any defence, and Sweyn lost his life there in the trench, and all those who had gone into the town. So it was said that Sweyn was the last to die of all his messmates, and spoke these words ere he died: 'Know that all men, whether I lose my life to-day or not, that I am one of the Saint Earl Rognvald's body-guard, and I now mean

to put my trust in being there where he is with God. Sweyn's men fared at once to their ships and pulled away, and nothing is told about their voyage before they come into the Orkneys. There now is an end of telling about Sweyn, and it is the talk of men that he hath been most of a man for his own sake in the western lands, both of yore and now-a-days, of those men who had no higher titles of honour than he."*

Here again in "the broad-cloth cruize" of this veteran Viking, we are reminded of the return of the gallant Captain Cavendish in the year 1589, after he had sailed round the world and captured the Santa Anna, belonging to the King of Spain. "The passing up of the river of Thames by Mr. Cavendish," says Captain Francis Allen, writing to Antony Bacon, 17th August 1589, "is famous, for his mariners and soldiers were clothed in silk, his sails of damask, his topmasts cloth of gold, and the richest prize that ever was brought at one time into England."† In fact, sea-roving seems to have been in full vigour all through the middle ages. Chaucer's Shipman, "good fellow" though he was, had few scruples—"

* Orkn. Sag., new ed., vol. i., pp. 461, 471.

† Athenæ Cantabrigienses, II., p. 546; (comp. p. 136 foll.) Cambridge, 1861.

" Ful many a draught of win he hadde draw
From Burdeux ward, while that the chapmen slepe.
Of nice conscience toke he no kepe ;
If that he faught, and hadde the higher hand,
By water he sent hem home to every land."

Nor had the old Viking spirit af all died out during the days of the Tudors. If Drake and Cavendish answered in their goodness to Thorwald and Gunnar, we must not forget that there were other rovers who for wickedness, were a match to the worst of the old Vikings. "The sea," says Mr. Turnbull, writing of the reign of Edward the Sixth, "was swept by privateers, who were little better than pirates, who plundered without scruple, and without discrimination of friend or foe, every vessel which came in their way." *

QUEEN GUNNHILLDA.

THE life of this remarkable woman merits more attention than could be devoted to it in the Introduction. She was the daughter of Auzur Toti, a man of rank and note

* Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, 1547-1553, 1861, a work most ably and faithfully executed, but destined, alas! to remain unfinished, a monument of Protestant intolerance, in a land where liberty of conscience has hitherto been held to prevail.

of Helgeland, and after she had risen in life by her wedding and wickedness, wild stories ran as to her teaching in youth. She had been sent by her father, it was said, to Finnmark to learn witchcraft from the Finns; and some believed that Mattul, the Finnish king himself was her master in magic. At any rate there she was when Eric Bloodaxe, Harold Fairhair's darling son, sailed back from Biarmaland or Permia, whither he had been on a Viking cruize. As they ran by the coast of Finnmark, some of Eric's men landed and went up the country. There they found in a hut a beautiful maiden, who told them her story, how she was Auzur's daughter, and how her masters were the two wisest wizards in all Finnmark; they could run a scent like dogs, both on frozen and unfrozen earth; they glided so swiftly on snowshoon that neither man nor beast could overtake them; their arrows hit whatever they aimed at; and when they were angry, the landscape turned round at their glance, and if any living thing came before their eyes, it fell straightway dead to earth. But from masters they had both become lovers, and from the burden of their wooing she besought Eric's men to set her free. The Finns were just then both out hunting, and the wily Gunnhillda, who had not been taught their lore in vain, hid the newcomers in the hut, and strewed something

which looked like ashes outside and inside the cabin. When the Finns came home, they asked if any one had been there, and were astonished to hear her say "No;" for they had followed the trail right up to the hut, and then lost it. When they had eaten and were full, she bade them lie down to sleep, one on either side of her, which they readily did, for neither had had any sleep for three days and nights, as each, jealous of the other, had not dared to take any rest. So she watched as they slept, and roused them up from time to time, to be sure that they were sound asleep. At last, as they slumbered and slept, she drew two seal-skins over their heads, fastened them round their waists, and then gave the king's men a sign to rush in and slay them. This was now an easy task. An awful storm arose as the spirits of the wizards passed from earth, but Eric's men waited till its fury was spent, and then made for their ships, and brought Gunnhillda to their lord, who took her on board his ship, carried her to her father in Helgeland, and then and there married her. So ran the strange tale, in all likelihood a pure fable, though, as Munch well remarks, the fame of the Finns or Lapps as wizards was deep rooted, and the belief in their power of witchcraft so widely spread, that it is likely enough that parents, especially

in a neighbouring district to Finnmark like Helgeland, may have really sent their children to that race of sorcerers to learn their black arts. The truth of the matter probably is, that Eric fell in with the beautiful maiden on his return from Permia, and that the only witchcraft practised in the matter was that worked by Gunnhillda's lovely face and artful mind, which held her husband in bondage ever afterwards. She is described as having been small of stature, but fair of face, of commanding mien, deep-thinking, glibspoken and fairspoken, grim-tempered, fickle in friendship, and very greedy of goods and land. Her husband was hard-hearted too, and greedy of gain too; he was a valiant champion and a lucky warrior, but in wit he was no match for his wife, for he was thoughtless, and had little forecast. In a word, he was made to be the slave of such a wife, and she became his evil genius.

As to her age, she seems to have been born about 908, and to have been not more than fourteen years old when Eric's men met her in Finnmark. As for Eric himself, he was born about 900. At twelve years of age his father fitted him out for his first Viking voyage, and for the next ten years he was almost always at sea. For four years he was the scourge of the eastern waters, and for another four years his course lay west. About

920 he returned to his father, who was then growing old, and shared his realm amongst his sons, giving to Eric a rank above the rest, but retaining the supremacy for himself. In 922 Eric went to Permia, and found Gunnhillda on his return. For ten years after Harold Fairhair had so shared his kingdom there was constant strife between his children. At last, unable to check their brawls, the aged king laid down the kingdom altogether in 930, resigning the supremacy to Eric, and died over eighty in 933. Before his death he had seen several grandchildren born to Eric and Gunnhillda, and one called Harold, afterwards surnamed Grayfell, was to succeed his father. Eric Bloodaxe had thus been three years supreme king over Norway when his father died, and meantime Gunnhillda had not been idle. "Their time was short," says Fagrskinna, "but still the people thought it over long, for they called the king easy tempered, but as for the queen, she was the unkindest of women. It soon came out, too, that Eric had caused his brothers, Bjorn the chapman, and Olaf thickleg, and more of them to be slain, and it was the common talk that he meant to cut off all his brothers and so reign alone over the kingdom, and then raise his sons to the whole realm after his own days, and thus he became hated by the whole people." But Harold Fairhair had

a son beyond the reach of Gunnhillda; this was Hacon, whom his father had sent to be fostered at the court of the great English king Athelstane, for which reason he was called Hacon Athelstane's foster-child. The year after his father's death he set sail for Norway, and landing in a province which did not acknowledge Eric's sway, he soon found such favour in the freemen's eyes, chiefly by freeing them from the odious tax which Harold Fairhair had laid upon their allodial holdings, that they one and all declared Harold Fairhair had come back again; not the worn-out, grasping Harold of his latter days, but the young, warlike, blooming Harold who had won his way to glory. Between two princes, the one so popular and the other so hated, the struggle was not long doubtful. At first one province declared that they would have Hacon for their king, then another, and another, and at last, two years after his father's death, Eric had to flee the land, and leave the kingdom to his brother. He betook himself to England, and found favour with King Athelstane, who gave him the lordship of Northumberland on condition that he should not molest his brother, the king's foster-child, in Norway. But Eric was a restless spirit, and as he thought how small Northumberland was when matched with the wide lands which his father Harold Fairhair had left

him, the old sea-roving spirit came over him, and he took again to the sea. His chief lurking place was the Orkneys, and there Gunnhillda married Ragnhilda, a woman who was a worthy daughter of such mother, to Earl Havard, the son of Earl Thorfinn skull-splitter. With the aid of his followers and connections, Eric wasted France, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales with constant inroads, returning in the winter to his lordship in Northumberland. So things went on so long as Athelstane lived, but after his death, his half-brother Edmund, who hated the Northmen, took away Northumberland from Eric. This laid England open to the sea-king, who now had so large a host that five kings followed him to war. Brave and lucky, Eric trusted too much to his good fortune, and ventured up the country, wasting it far and wide. Edmund sent against him Olaf, or Anlaf, one of his tributary kings, and Eric was overborne by numbers in a bloody battle and fell, with the five kings who followed him, as well as Arnkel and Erlend, the Orkney earls. This was in the year 941. Gunnhillda was then, in all likelihood, with her daughter in Orkney; with all her faults, she seems to have loved her Viking lord, and had an ode made on his death, the beginning of which has been handed down to us, and which is a very grand piece of poetry.

The following is an amplified rendering of Eric's Death Song:—*

ERIC'S DEATH SONG.

"What dreams!" Odin spoke
"Methought ere day broke
I garnished Valhalla
For glory-full folk,
Fast up from the fray
Flitted forms of the fey,
I wakened the warriors, Hah
I bade them rise up
Benches to furnish,
Beer stoups to burnish,
Valkyries bore wine-cup
As though came a king.
Hither from earth
This morning must part
Warriors of worth;
Expect them ere evening,
Glad is my heart."

ODIN ASKS.

"O Bragi! Why under
A thousand doth thunder
Our rainbow bridge? Answer
What bodeth this host."

* In this account of Eric's fortunes, Fagrskinna has been mainly followed. The dates are Guðbrandr Vigfússon's. The reader, who wishes to see a critical examination of all the authorities, must consult Munch, N. H. I., 726 foll., where Eric's fall is placed in the year 950.

BRAGI ANSWERS.

"Lintel and rooftree, rafter and bar,
Settle in hall, eke pillar and post,
As these men march onward, tremble and jar,
Quiver and quake, shiver and crack;
Hall-doors fly open, wall-weapons rattle:
In glory excelling,
From Hell's gloomy dwelling,
With whirlwind of battle
Our Balder comes back."

ODIN ANSWERS.

"Unwisely now Bragi,
Though wise, hast thou spoken;
Valhalla kens better—
Not Baldr's this token—
For Eric it groaneth,
I tell thee his fall;
Each champion so trusty,
His lord now bemoaneth,
With weapons war-rusty
He wends to our hall."

ODIN SPEAKS.

"Sigmund and Sinfjotli
Up with you lithely,
Out with you cheerily
Eric to greet,
Bid him in blithely—
See! He steps wearily,
All up the rain-arch,
Long is the day's march—

Hasten the hero on threshold to meet ;
Dreary the journey
'Neath buckler and byrnie, &c.
Hasten to bear up our chosen one's feet."

SIGMUND ASKS.

" Why Eric of all
Other kings must thou call ?"

ODIN ANSWERS.

" Because his brand ruddy,
Clove helm after helm
Because his blade bloody
Smote realm after realm."

SIGMUND ASKS.

" Why snatch him then, father,
From fortune and glory ?
Why not leave him rather
To fill up his story
On victory's road ?"

ODIN ANSWERS.

" Because no man knoweth
When grey wolf so gory
His grisly maw showeth
In Asgard's abode ;
Therefore Odin calleth,
And Eric fain falleth,
To follow his liege lord, and fight for his God."

SIGMUND SPEAKS.

" Hail to thee Eric now,
Heartily welcome thou !

Enter thou haughty king,
Enter the hall ;
I ask but this only,
What Princes from far
Come with thee ; not lonely
Thou surely hast hastened,
Leaving the battle where foemen fell chastened.
Hither to Heaven, from hurly of war ?"

" Kings five," Eric said,
" Their names I will tell,
I the sixth, at their head,
In the gory fight fell."

After the death of Eric, Gunnhillda found shelter with her sons at the court of Harold Gorm's son, surnamed " Blue tooth," or " Waxy tooth." The Danish king even took her son Harold, known in our Saga as Harold Grayfell, as his foster-child, and aided both mother and sons in repeated attempts to recover their footing in Norway. Time after time they were worsted, and two or more of the princes slain by King Hacon. At last in the battle at Fitje, in 960, where Harold Grayfell had again been beaten by his valiant uncle, an arrow, after the fight was won, pierced the shoulder of King Hacon. The rude leechcraft of those days was unable to staunch the bleeding, an artery had been touched, and the best of Harold Fairhair's line bled to death. The belief of the age held Gunnhillda guilty of the deed, and thought that by her

black arts she had wrought the death of her foeman by launching against him a magic shaft. It was clearly a random shot from some bow drawn at a venture which pierced the harness of the king as he followed on the footsteps of the fleers.

After Hacon's death Harold Grayfell succeeded to the central portion of Norway, at the express wish it is said of the dying Hacon. But this central portion of the land was too narrow for Gunnhillda. To the north, in Drontheim, ruled Earl Sigurd of Hladir, one of Harold Fairhair's chieftains; south and south-east in the Uplands and in "the Bay," ruled Gudred and Tryggvi, two grandsons of Harold Fairhair, and therefore Harold Grayfell's first cousins. It would be long to tell the story of Gunnhillda's plotting against these rivals near her throne, suffice it to say that first Earl Sigurd, and then both Gudred and Tryggvi fell victims to her guile. Gunnhillda, "Kings' mother" as she was called, and her children, were now supreme rulers in Norway. It was a hard time in every way for the people. Harold Grayfell, who seems not to have been without a rough humour of his own,* and who was brave in common with all his race,

* This is shown in the way in which he got his surname, "Grayfell." It happened one summer, as we are told by Snorro Sturla's son, that a ship from Iceland, laden with skins and furs,

was merely a tool in the hands of his mother. She had been brought back by foreign aid, and her aim was to rely not on the people so much, as on foreign aid to support her power. In those days the anger of heaven against princes and people was thought even more than in our time to be shewn in natural phenomena, so when harvest after harvest failed as soon as Harold Grayfell became king, that was thought to be a sign from heaven against the wickedness of the reigning house. It is at this period of Gunnhillda's power that our Saga shews us how she ruled at the King's Crag in "the Bay;" with regard to the relations of the queen with Hrut, we leave the Saga to speak for itself, only adding that other Ice-

put into the Hardanger Firth, where King Harold then was. When they broke bulk and began to trade, few cared to buy the cargo. The captain, who was known before to Harold, went to him and complained that trade was so dull. The king said he would come and see him, and shortly after put out in a well-manned galley. As soon as he got on board he looked at the wares, and asked the captain if he would give him "a grayfell," or cape of gray fur. "With all my heart," said the captain, "and more too, if you will." So the king took the cape and threw it over his shoulders, and with that went over the side into his boat. But before he rowed away every one of his men had bought himself a cape, and in a few days after there were so many in the town that wished to buy capes, that the whole cargo was not enough to meet half the demand. After that the king was called "Grayfell."

landers found favour in her sight as well as the stalwart swordsman of the Western Dales.* At this time, 963, Gunnhillda must have been at least fifty-three years old, and Hrut about thirteen years younger. Laxdæla, which however is not so sure a guide as our Saga, tells us that Gunnhillda, after she had led him down to the ship, made him a speech full of praise, and given him a gold ring, "threw her cloak over her head and went back hastily to the town."

So things went on in Norway for six years after Hrut went back to Iceland. The fall of Gunnhillda and her sons is an instance of retribution worth recording. When Earl Sigurd of Hladir was cut off, he left a son who proved a far more formidable enemy than his father ever could have been. This was Earl Hacon, afterwards known by the name of the "mighty," or the "bad," as heathen or Christians spoke of his rule. He was of middle stature, fair in face, well skilled in arms, and very crafty and deep thinking. When his father died he was about twenty-five years of age, and for a time was able to hold his own against Gunnhillda. But when, shortly after, both Gudred and Tryggvi, who had been his allies, were cut off by treachery, Hacon was forced to fly,

* Olaf the peacock for instance, Hrut's nephew, Laxd. 73, 75, 85; and Thorgils Scarleg's foster-child.

and after wasting Norway year after year, at last took shelter with king Harold, Gorm's son, in Denmark. It may seem strange that he should fly for refuge to Harold Grayfell's foster-father; but Gunnhillda, by taking possession of the provinces round the Bay, and especially by settling herself at the King's Crag, had broken an agreement made with the Danish king, who looked on those border provinces as his own.

Now it was that Earl Hacon began to shew that he was a greater master in craft and guile than Gunnhillda herself. King Harold Gorm's son had a nephew named Gold-Harold, so called from the great wealth which he had won by Viking voyages. He was a bold warrior, and, as the son of the Danish king's elder brother, had awkward claims to the crown. In fact he was a king without a crown, and eager to wear one. No wonder, then, that little love was lost between uncle and nephew. Soon after Earl Hacon reached the Danish king's court he feigned illness and kept his lodging. Both the king and Gold-Harold came to see him, and both laid open their griefs to him. At last Earl Hacon told the king that it would be better to try and get Gold-Harold some other realm instead of Denmark, to which he had clear claims. "What did he say to helping him to become king of Norway?" The king thought Nor-

way hard to win, and besides Harold Grayfell was his foster-child.

"A foster-child," answered Hacon, "who has repaid you badly for all your help. As for the rest, I do not say make war on Norway, but send over and ask Harold Grayfell to come over and take up the fief which belongs to him here in Denmark, and when he comes Gold-Harold can fall on him and so win Norway."

"Very true," said the king, "but 'tis an ill deed to betray one's foster-child." "Better kill a Norse Viking than thine own Dansk nephew," was the answer.

In this way the king's consent was got, and at the same time Earl Hacon urged Gold-Harold to do the deed and win Norway, adding, that once master of that realm, he would find it easy work to recover Denmark when Harold Gorm's son died.

So a splendid embassy was sent to Norway to greet Harold Grayfell in the king's name, and to say that as he had heard how hard the times were in Norway, he had sent to bid King Harold Grayfell to come with 200 men and take Jutland as a fief for that winter. The embassy at the same time said that Earl Hacon lay at death's door. Though some suspected guile, the end of Harold Grayfell's counsel was that he should go. Towards the end of summer he set out with three ships

and eighty men in each. They ran into Limfirth, where they were told to wait for the king. There Gold-Harold came against them with nine war-ships in full trim. After a brave fight Harold Grayfell's little band were cut off to a man, and the first act of this tragedy was over.

It is said that with his dying breath Harold Grayfell foretold the like fate for his adversary; nor was it long delayed. No sooner was the black deed done than Earl Hacon began to work on the Danish king's fears. "'Twere a foolish thing to suffer Gold-Harold to seize on Norway. Only last winter he told me he meant to kill you."

"But it is not seemly in me to kill my nephew," said Harold Gorm's son.

"Well," answered the crafty earl, "I will undertake to win Norway for you in a single day, and to be your faithful vassal and pay you tribute, if you will agree to take a compensation from me for killing your nephew." *

So the matter was settled, and Earl Hacon, who had twelve or fifteen ships all ready for sea, put out to seek

* Unless this agreement had been made beforehand, Harold Gorm's son would have had the blood feud against Earl Hacon, and might have taken his life in turn.

for Gold-Harold, whom he met just after his battle with Harold Grayfell. It was no hard thing to conquer him when he and his men were wounded and weary with fight. So, after a gallant struggle, Gold-Harold was cut off. Earl Hacon seized the gold from which the Danish prince derived his surname, and with it he paid the uncle the compensation for the death of the nephew.

So far all the authorities agree. After this point some of them, and Snorro Sturla's son amongst the rest, say that King Harold Gorm's son raised a mighty host, with which he sailed for Norway, whence Gunnhillda and the sons she still had left fled before him. He then installed Earl Hacon as his vassal with supreme power, and returned to his own realm. This account leaves it uncertain where the wicked queen died; but her last shelter would in all likelihood have been the Orkneys, where her daughter Ragnhilda, after plotting the death of husband upon husband, was still in power. But according to other, and those not less trustworthy chroniclers, a far other doom overtook Gunnhillda. These authorities tell us, that Earl Hacon hastened to Norway while King Harold Gorm's son was gathering his host, boasted to Gunnhillda that he had avenged her son's death on Gold-Harold, and told her that he was the

bearer of a message from the aged king of Denmark, that if she would come to visit him he would make her his wife. This offer was too much for the lustful woman. She set sail with three ships, and on landing in Jutland was met by the king's men, who were to lead her to the bridal feast. For a while the journey went well, but at nightfall, as they passed a dreary moor, her companions seized and plunged her into the morass, which was called afterwards "Gunnhillda's moss."*

If this story be true, and it is not so unlikely as some have wished it to seem, Earl Hacon had taken ample revenge for his father's murder on Gunnhillda and her wicked house. Some have seen a strange corroboration of the story in the fact, that in the year 1836 there was found, near the ancient royal residence of Haraldskjær, at Veile, in Jutland, in a moss now called "Juthemose," the body of a woman staked down into

* The authorities for this story are,—(*a*), Olaf Tryggvi's son's Saga, in the Flatey Book; (*b*), Ágrip, a short Chronicle of Norway, ch. x.; and, (*c*), The Monk Theodorick, ch. 6; and (*d*), The Jomsvíkinga Saga. Three at least of these authorities are respectable enough; and, though the Jomsvíkinga Saga may be a late and romantic work, it by no means necessarily follows that it is untrue in giving this story. Nor is it, though Munch asserts it, at all clear that the story in all these authorities springs from one and the same source. It is remarkable, too, that Ágrip and Theodorick are Norwegian and not Icelandic authorities.

the morass. She was small of stature, of middle age, and wore a dress which, in the distant time to which the wearer plainly belonged, might have been of costly make and material.

On this discovery, a controversy of some warmth arose in Denmark over these miserable remains, which ended, as such strife always ends, in no positive result. As the Northmen often employed this mode of execution on criminals of the weaker sex, as it is not certain that King Harold Gorm's son lived at Haraldskjær, and as Juthemose, though it perhaps might be distorted out of Gunnhilldasmose, does not positively spring from that name; all that can be said for the story is, that, like the ownership of Alfred's jewel in the Ashmolean Library at Oxford, it must always remain a problem whether this body was or was not that of Gunnhillda Kings' mother; but, in conclusion, we may remark that the question, whether the remains were hers or no, in no way affects the authority of the story which tells of her tragical end in Jutland—a story which rests, in our opinion, on ground as firm as that which leaves it a matter of doubt how, or in what country, the wicked queen was overtaken by her last enemy.*

* See Munch, N. H. ii. 54, 55, who leans strongly to the side which asserts that Gunnhillda did not die in Jutland. See also

MONEY AND CURRENCY IN THE TENTH CENTURY.

The question of money and currency in Iceland, in the tenth century, is one of great difficulty, that difficulty being much increased by the fact that the sums and proportions mentioned in the Sagas and Laws relate to a period at which the currency and the standards of the tenth century had undergone great changes. In a word, the writers apply the currency and standards of their own age to one which in those respects was widely different. The following are the results of much inquiry into the matter. In early times there were two standards of value—measure, and weight, and two materials,

two essays by Petersen in the Annaler for Nordisk Oldkyndighed, who thinks it probable that she died in Jutland, and that the body found was possibly hers. See on the other hand, Worsaae, Hist. Tidskrift, iii. p. 244-292. On the whole it was a very pretty quarrel. It is remarkable, however, that in the speech put into King Olaf Tryggvi's son's mouth in the Flatey book, when converting Earl Sigurd, he only speaks of "most of Gunnhillda's sons having been cut off (afráðnir) though Ragnhilda was still alive." Now, it would seem probable that the zealous king, had the woman who slew his father met with such a just retribution, would scarcely have failed to make a point of her fate in his "long and able speech," by mentioning her along with her sons, and so alluding to the manner of her death.

to which those standards were adjusted—wadmal* or woollen cloth for measure, and silver for weight.

1. In the standard of woollen or measure, the unity was the ell, and its multiples up to a hundred. This hundred being the long hundred of twelve tens, or 120.† This standard, which was called that of measure or tale, was the currency of the island in old times, and still exists in Iceland as the national currency (landaurar, talið) at the present day. All landed property, and goods and chattels are valued in it; and when it is said that such and such a bit of land, or such a herd of cattle, or so much furniture are worth 20, 60, or 80 hundreds, the meaning of the words, and the value of the property, is as well understood as both would have been in Njal's time.

2. In the standard of weight or silver, the unity was the ounce, or eyrir (pl. aurar), eight of which made the

* Icel. vaðmál. The word is still alive in Orkney and Shetland; see Jamieson's Dict. *sub voc.* "vadmell" and "wadmaal." It was also known, according to Grose, in some parts of England as "woadmel."

† Wherever the figure C for hundred occurs in the Sagas, this invariably means the long hundred of twelve tens (tólfrætt); tíu tíu is used to express ten tens. Guðbrandr Vigfússon thinks that the old Icelandic ell was only half the length of the English ell of three feet, and he draws this inference from the fact, that English yard-wide cloths and stuffs are called two ells (tvíelnt). This, perhaps, is scarcely sufficient evidence as to the old ell; but if it be correct, Skarphedinn's leap across Markfleet shrinks from 24 to 18 feet.

mark (mörk) or pound. But as time went on, these two standards were confounded together, and though ells and hundreds belonged originally strictly to the woollen standard, or that of measure alone, and ounces (aurar), and marks (mörk) to that of weight alone, men began to speak of hundreds of weighed silver, and of measured or reckoned ounces and marks of woollen. So that, though it was etymologically right only to talk of weighed marks, and measured or reckoned hundreds, and etymologically wrong to talk of weighed hundreds and measured or reckoned marks, still custom and convenience soon broke through etymological rules, and thus we find ounces and marks used to express the country currency by measure and tale, and ells and hundreds weighed to express the silver standard. This confusion between ounces and marks by tale, and ells and hundreds by weight, was worse confounded by the introduction, at a very early time, of foreign minted silver or coin, which of course would be reckoned by tale. In the tenth century there seems to have been but one such coin, the penning, or Anglo-Saxon penny, of which vast numbers found their way to the north by trade and war.* It is improbable that there

* According to Munch N. H. I. 799, it is doubtful whether there was any coin struck in Norway before the end of the reign

were such coins at the period of which we write as marks or ounces, but that, when those sums are mentioned, they were weighed or made up by tale from the coins which we have mentioned. But in those days silver by tale and silver by weight were one and the same thing.

Having thus explained the two standards of weight and tale, and shown how they became confounded in terms, while remaining distinct in fact, we proceed to inquire, what proportion the woollen currency by tale bore to the silver currency by weight. How did the hundred ells by tale stand with regard to the hundred in silver by weight. This naturally varied at different times, but about the year 1000 the proportion was as four to one. According to Grágás four hundreds in woollen, and twenty yards as margin, were then equal to one hundred in silver, and the passage is so remarkable, that it is worth quotation at length. It is

of Hacon Athelstane's foster-child, who died 960 ; in fact, it is a question whether there were any coins struck in his reign at all, for one which has been found bearing the name " Hacon " may be ascribed to Earl Hacon. In any case, according to Munch, the number of Norwegian coins in circulation, if any existed at all, must have been very few, while the quantity of Anglo-Saxon coins found all over the north shews that they must have passed current everywhere. In later times the " örtug," a Norwegian coin, is spoken of as well as the " penning :" the eyrir or ounce contained three örtugs.

there said, sect. 245, ed. Kbh. 1856, "At that time, when Christianity came out hither to Iceland, silver was current in all great dealings. It was to be pale silver, and must stand cutting, and be most part silver, and if it were coined, so coined that sixty* pennies made an

* This is probably an error for twenty. The editor of the new edition of Grágás remarks, in a note, that the scribe seems to have written two x's, which were afterwards altered to lx, The ounce in early times would have been coined into twenty Anglo-Saxon pennies; but when the standard was debased, as it was when this MS. of Grágás was written, it would have been coined into sixty pence. The scribe, in copying an older MS., first wrote the xx as it stood in the original, and then altered the sum to suit the standard of his own time. There can be no doubt that in the thirteenth century sixty pennies went to the eyrir. Thus Snorro Sturla's son, in the Heimskringla, speaking of St. Olaf's attempt to tax the Icelanders—"Penning . . . þann er x væri fyrir alin vaðmáls." "A penny, ten of which would go for an ell of wadmal;" as in Snorro's time it is certain that six ells of wadmal went to the ounce, there would be sixty pennies in the ounce. At the same time the New Gula Thing's code in Norway speaks of thirty pennies to the ounce. "En xxx peninga skal eyri hvern, hvárt sem gengr vegit eða talt."—N. G. L. I., 225. "But thirty pennies shall be in every eyrir, whether it be by weight or by tale." It is very remarkable that Grágás speaks in two places of x pennies only as going to the eyrir, and that it calls silver of this kind "the old law-silver." "Penning skal hann gefa goða þeim er hann leiðir í lög, þat skal hinn tíundi hlutr eyris vera."—Gr. I., 357, 4to. "He (the thrall that is made free) shall give a penny to the priest who brings him into the law (who admits him to legal rights), that shall be the

ounce weighed, and then silver by tale and silver by weight was all one. A hundred in silver was then

tenth part of an eyrir." Again—"Lögsilfr et forna þat er x penningar göra eyri."—Grág. II. 188, 4to. "The old law-silver, of which ten pennies make an ounce." But here again a puzzling qualification is added—"Oc meir se silfrslit á en messingar, oc þoli scor, oc se jamt utan sem innan." "And which has more the hue of silver than of latten, and which will bear cutting, and is alike outside and inside." In all such qualifying expressions in MS. of the thirteenth century, as to the purity of silver, one cannot help thinking that the scribe, when speaking of the old standard silver, applies to it the legal stipulations required for the "lög-silfr" or "law-silver" of his own, and that a much later, day. This "bleikt silfr," or "gangsilfr," or "lögsilfr," this "pale," or "current," or "lawful silver," in which the silver just turned the scale over the alloy, which was more of a silvern than a brazen hue, and which was even in colour and fibre throughout, was the legal silver currency of the thirteenth century, and may be reckoned as worth 2s. 6d. an ounce. Opposed to it, as superior in purity, was "skírt silfr," or "brendt silfr," "pure silver" or "burnt silver;" and as inferior in purity, grásilfr or blásilfr, "gray" or "blue silver." We know from Grágás (II. 193, 8vo), that early in the thirteenth century a mark of this pure or burnt silver was worth an ounce of gold "that would stand the fire," and these were each worth sixty ounces of law silver; in other words, the proportion between pure silver and law silver was then almost eight to one, and the proportion between pure or burnt silver and gold was exactly as eight to one, since there were eight ounces or eyrir in every pound or mark. As for "gray silver" or "blue silver," we are told by a MS. in the Arna-Magnæan Library at Copenhagen, 732, p. 16, that it was "thirty times less valuable than gold." All these facts point to

reckoned the same as four hundreds and twenty* ells of wadmal, and then the ounce (of silver) was worth half a mark of wadmal."

It now remains to inquire into the value of these standards respectively in English money.† It appears,

a rapid depreciation of the silver standard, attended, as we shall see, by a proportionate rise in the woollen currency. The ounce of silver, which, at the calculation of 4s. 6d. to the eyrir, would have been worth twenty-five ells in the tenth century, was only worth six in the thirteenth. Thus Grágás II. 192, 8vo. —"Þat er fiarlag at Althings male at vi alnir vaðmáls gilldz nytz oc onotit scolo vera í eyre." "This is the scale of goods by the custom (or decree) of the Althing, that six ells of good new and unworn wadmal shall be worth an eyrir." Later still, there appears to have been further depreciation, if we may judge from the expressions "þriggja alna eyrir," which seems to mean an ounce in which the silver was only worth three ells. But these questions of the different proportions of the wadmal currency in the thirteenth century are of immense difficulty, and we gladly leave them to return to an earlier age.

* These twenty ells were a margin or maketale, given over and above the proper quantity. They answer to the extra 6d. in the pound which was paid into the early English Exchequer when payments were made by weight (ad scalem), and answered to the Trebuchet in France, as so much thrown in to turn the scale. See Madox Hist. Excheq.; and Thomas, "The Ancient Exchequer of England," p. 25.

† The researches of M. C. A. Holmboe (De priscâ re Monetariâ Novegiæ Christ. 1844, p. 3. Comp. The Numismatic Chronicle, 1857, pp. 149-50) have shewn that the weight of the Norwegian eyrir or ounce was equal to 412·58 grains Troy.

from the most reliable inquiries, that the value of the Norwegian eyrir or ounce which was the unit of the silver standard was 4s. 6d., from which it follows that the penny, of which there were to be twenty in an ounce weighed, would be worth nearly twopence three farthings sterling. As there were eight ounces in a mark, the worth of that weight of silver would be thirty-six shillings. As the mark of wadmal was equal to a fourth part of the silver mark, its value would be nine shillings. With respect to the value of one hundred in silver, or four hundred and twenty ells in wadmal, the most reliable researches have shewn it to be equal to twenty ounces or aurar, or two marks and a half, and consequently its value in English money would be £4 : 10s. for the silver hundred.

These would be the values of the eyrir or ounce, mark, and hundred, supposing the purity of the silver to have been equal to that of our standard silver ; and there is every reason to believe that this was the case

The Anglo-Saxon ounce, which was no doubt the same as the old Tower ounce, weighed 450 grains Troy, and the old Cologne or German ounce weighed 451·38 grains Troy. This old Norwegian ounce of 412·58 grains Troy, as compared with the present Troy ounce of 480 grains, shews the value of the silver in the former to have been very nearly 4s. 6d., assuming the present price of standard silver to be 5s. 2d. an ounce.

in the tenth century. In the first place, we are actually in a position to test the purity of the silver then current in the North. It was almost all English, and the researches of Ruding and others have proved that the Anglo-Saxon coins—however deficient some of them may have been in weight, partly from design and partly from the rude appliances of the Anglo-Saxon Mint—are in fact of the same purity as our sterling silver, and that our standard is in fact the Anglo-Saxon standard. In the next place, we know that Anglo-Saxon coins were carried to Iceland in large quantities. The penny which Grim Goatshoe got from every household for surveying the island, before the Althing was established in the year 929, was no doubt an English penny; the money which Egil brought back to Iceland after the Battle of Brunanburg was Anglo-Saxon money; and so, too, there is little doubt that the penny, or scatt-penny, which Eyvind Scaldspoiler got, in the reign of Harold Grayfell, from every household in Iceland for his poem in praise of Icelanders, and which we are expressly told was equal to three weighed pennies of a later age, was an Anglo-Saxon penny.* For these

* When it is said that this scatt-penny equalled three weighed pennies, this is another proof that the standard had been debased at the time when the account of the gift to Eyvind

reasons, both because we know the exact weight of silver in the old Norwegian ounce, and because we know that the silver of which it was ordinarily composed was pure, we are inclined to think that the values given above will be found to be correct. It is, however, very evident that the "pale (bleikt) silver" mentioned in the extract from Grágás, "which would bear cutting and be most part silver," was considerably alloyed, and if the writer is actually describing the silver current in the year 1000, and not rather the gangsilfr or lögsilfr of his own day, then the silver of the tenth century must have been worth far less in English money. As it was to be "most part silver," we may assume that the ounce of this "pale" silver, or law-silver, would be 2s. 6d., in which case the mark would have been worth only 20 shillings sterling, the mark of wadmal only 5 shillings, and the hundred in silver or four hundred and twenty ells in wadmal £2 : 10s.

In a tabular form the relative proportions of the two hundreds, as well as their values respectively in English money at 4s. 6d. and 2s. 6d. an ounce, would stand as follows:

was written down, and that the old Anglo-Saxon penny was then worth three later pennies of the same weight, but each containing only a third of the pure silver in the old coin.

100 (120) in Silver.	100, 120+5† in Wadmal.	Mark Silver.	Mark Wadmal.
£4 : 10s.	£1 : 2 : 6	36s.	9s.
	125 ells = 22s. 6d.	oz., eyrir, silver.	oz., wadmal.
	5 ells = 10¾d.	4s. 6d.	1s. 1½d.
	1 ell = 2$\frac{4}{25}$d.		

100 (120) in Silver.	100 120 + 5 in Wadmal.	Mark Silver.	Mark Wadmal.
£2 : 10s.	12s. 6d.	20s.	5s.
	125 ells = 12s. 6d.	oz., eyrir, silver.	oz., wadmal.
	5 ells = 6d.	2s. 6d.	7½d.
	1 ell = 1$\frac{1}{5}$d.		

With regard to the relative value of these sums in the tenth century, it may occur to some readers that the proportion of four to one between the silver standard and the wadmal currency is too low, especially if we suppose that the silver of the tenth century was equal to our standard silver; but in making this comparison, it must be remembered that in the tenth century the precious metals were more abundant and in less demand than they were in succeeding centuries. There was less coining and more barter, less want of money as a circulating medium, and more of it hoarded. Commerce

† This 5 ells is the fourth part of the 20 ells of margin.

and Viking cruizes brought a rich store of silver into the north, which lay idle except when its owner was called on to complete a large bargain, or to pay some blood-fine at the bidding of the law. There was then no difference, as we have seen from Grágás, between silver by tale and silver by weight, but a century or two after, when Viking voyages had almost ceased, and the supply of silver into the North was cut off, there was a very great difference between sums paid in coin which were clipped and debased, and so depreciated, and payments by weight in pure silver.* In the tenth century, we have seen that the value of the eyrir or silver ounce

* It is curious that the first of the kings who ruled in England, who gave systematically bad weight, was Canute.† This would be between 1017-36. The theoretical weight of the Anglo Saxon penny should be about 22 grains, and Ethelred the unready not only gave that amount, but more, some of his coins weighing as much as 26 grains. Canute's, on the other hand, rarely exceed 16 grains, and in one instance fall as low as 13; still the silver was pure. We may infer from the following passage in the Saga of Harold the stern, who died A.D. 1066, that, up to his time, the coinage in Norway had not been debased. "But when the eight day of Yule came, then their pay was given to the king's men. That silver was called 'Harold's coin,' it was the more part copper. But when Haldor took his pay, he put it into the skirt of his cloak and looked at it, and it seemed to

† This fact has been pointed out to the translator by his friend Mr. John Evans, F.S.A., of Nash Mills, whose authority on all matters relating to British and Anglo-Saxon coins is unquestionable.

would be twenty-five ells of wadmal, but in later times, as it became debased, it was only worth six, and later still, only three ells of the woollen currency. Then arose that distinction, which we are expressly warned by our authorities not to accept as existing in earlier times; then it was that silver by tale and silver by weight became two different things. Then it is that we first hear of örtugs as well as pennies, and of marks and ounces and örtugs by weight, which were six times as valuable as the same sums by tale. It is very doubtful whether these sums by tale are another way of expressing the old proportion between the silver and woollen

him as though the silver in which they had been paid was not pure; so he tossed it up with his other hand, and down fell all the silver on the straw." Fornm. S. vi. 243. This Haldor was son of our friend Snorri the priest. He had been King Harold's companion in Constantinople; and he now complained so bitterly that he could not get his pay without cheating, that, though the rest of the king's men were content with the debased coin, Harold had to give Haldor twelve ounces of "burnt silver," with which he was content. It may be inferred from this passage, that up to that time the silver current in the north had been pure. In fact, just when the kings in the north began to coin, the source whence they had drawn their supplies of the precious metals was stopped. England and the west ceased to be the battlefield of the Northmen, and the value of silver rose rapidly. With the rise came the usual arts of a scanty exchequer—clipping and debasement of the standard, followed as certainly by a corresponding rise in the necessaries of life.

standards, or whether they represent a further depreciation of the silver currency intercalated as it were between the lögsilfr, which in that case would be equivalent to the weighed currency, and the landaurar or woollen standard. But this again is a question which does not so much concern us in the tenth century, and which we may leave with the earnest wish, that some Icelander fitted for the task may yet unravel this tangled web.*

If we apply the data at which we have arrived to our Saga, we shall find that while all the fines, bót, in suits are in the standard of silver, whether by weight or in coin, all other transactions within the country are in the woollen or national currency. Thus when Mord pays

* The following table will shew the relation of these two silver standards, as well as of the woollen currency or landaurar in the thirteenth century, when the standard of six ells to the silver ounce or eyrir was current.

Marks. (Mörk) weighed (vegin.)	Marks. (Merkur) by tale (taldir.)	Oz. (Aurar) weighed (vegnir.)	Örtug. (Ortugar) weighed (vegnar.)	Oz. (Aurar) by tale (taldir.)	Örtug. (Ortugar) by tale (taldar.)	Ells. (Alnir) of Wadmall, (vadmals.)
1	6	8	24	48	144	288
$\frac{1}{6}$	1	$1\frac{1}{3}$	4	8	24	48
	$\frac{3}{4}$	1	3	6	18	36
		$\frac{1}{3}$	1	2	6	12
			$\frac{1}{2}$	1	3	6
				$\frac{1}{3}$	1	2
					$\frac{1}{2}$	1

Hrut sixty hundreds as her portion, that means the sixty hundreds in wadmal, which would be a great portion as compared with Hrut's landed property and his ship.* Again, when Flosi bargains with the Easterling for his ship, and had over and above 20 hundreds in wares, those were hundreds in wadmal and not in silver. When Flosi gave Eyjolf the gold ring which was worth twelve hundreds in russet stuff,† equal to 288 ounces in

* Guðbrandr Vigfússon informs me that Kamness and Hrutstede are now valued at thirty-six, or nineteen, hundreds by the old and new Icelandic valuations respectively (see Skýrslur um Landshagi á Íslandi, I., 694, 5). It is plain that Unna's portion was reckoned in the wadmal currency from Mord's words afterwards with regard to Mord's property in Norway, which was worth a hundred (120) marks. When Mord calls that much goods or money compared with what his daughter would have from him, he means, in fact, to say that his daughter's portion, which was sixty hundreds in woollen, was little compared with this Norway inheritance of 120 marks by weight. If Unna's portion had been sixty hundreds by weight or in silver, each worth two marks and a half, it would have been much more than a hundred marks in silver, and Mord could not have spoken of it as a small sum compared with Hrut's inheritance.

† In Icelandic Mórendr, neut. mórendt; and modern Icelandic móraudr, neut. mórautt. No one who has been in Shetland can be in doubt as to the colour, for there he will find "moratt" or "morutt" everywhere used for the russet wool, which is the natural colour of so many of the fleeces in those islands. It is remarkable as showing the close connection which was kept up between Norway and Orkney and Shetland, that

silver, that was in the national currency (landaurar), though this russet stuff was reckoned as dearer than the ordinary wadmal. According to Grágás (II. 193, 8vo.), 5 ells of it went for the eyrir or ounce when 6 of the ordinary wadmal went for that sum. If the ounce be reckoned at 4s. 6d., the ring would have been worth £64 : 16s. in our money, if at 2s. 6d., £36. With regard to the bót or compensation for manslaughter, there can be no doubt that the oldest way of paying it was by ring-tale (at baugatali), and that those blood-fines were connected in some way with the rings used in religious worship. It seems to be universally agreed, that in the graduated scale of those rings mentioned in Grágás—þrímerkingr* (three

the weights and measures in those islands followed the standards of the mother country, thus the "ure" or "ore" in Orkney is only another form of "eyrir." It too was the 8th part of a mark, and was the fundamental unit of weight and value in Orkney. In Shetland we find the cuttel or cut ell, as the fundamental unit, six of which went to the "ure," this cut ell being the ell of wadmal. In fact, the unity in Orkney began one step higher up, while in Shetland the old woollen currency of six ells to the "ure" or "eyrir" was retained.—See Mr. Balfour's "Oppressions in Orkney and Zetland." Edinburgh, 1859. Glossary sub voc. "ure," "mark," and "cuttel."

* This ring or sum of three marks runs thoughout the Saga. Thus, when Mord reclaims Unna's dower from Hrut, he couples his demand with a fine of three marks. Again Otkell and Skamkell give Mord three marks for his help in finding out Hallgerda's theft. So again Hall of the Side gave Thorgeir the Priest

marks) = 24 oz., tvítugauri = 20 oz., tvímerkingr (two marks) = 16 oz., and tólfeyringr 12 oz., the 2d of 20 oz. or two marks and a half in silver, was equivalent to a hundred in silver. The rate of these compensations varied in different times, but in the tenth century, twelve ounces in silver, or a silver ring of that weight, was reckoned the fitting compensation for the loss of a thrall, and accordingly, we find that price paid more than once for thralls in our Saga. At the same period, one hundred in silver was the price of a freeman who had no fixed abode of his own, and lived at service in another freeman's house. Thus, we find this sum paid in our Saga for Atli, whose bargain, on remaining in Njal's service had been, that if slain he should not be paid for as a thrall. A like amount was paid for Brynjolf the unruly, and in both instances it is added that that price was the blood-fine for a freeman. So also in the case of Thord Freedman's son, Njal tells his sons that he had been paid for at the rate of two men, the price having been two hundreds in silver. But, at the same period, there can be no doubt, that the common price for a freeman who had a house and land of his own was two hundreds in silver, and in the case of Thorwald,

of Lightwater a fee of three marks to utter the law. And finally, Mord Valgard's son made himself liable to a fine of three marks, for wrongly summoning the neighbours on the inquest.

Halgerda's first husband, we are expressly told that two hundreds in silver were reckoned "a good price for a man." This price was paid by Hauskuld for the slaying of Thorwald, as well as in several other cases in our Saga. When the man slain was of great rank or worth, a higher price was put on him. Thus Hauskuld, Thrain's son, was to have three times the ordinary price, or six hundreds in silver, put upon him, and when all the body of freemen at the Althing contributed to pay an atonement for Ljot, Hall of the Side's son, the sum collected amounted to no less than 8 hundreds in silver, or four times the common price. With regard to Njal, though the Saga says that he was paid for with a threefold price, this in all probability means that his blood-fine was three hundreds. Perhaps the amount of money to be collected in all, when so many other blood-fines had to be paid at the same time, may have helped to lower his price.* But in all these sums we think we see a fresh proof that the hundred

* It is evident that throughout the Saga there is a doubt on the writer's mind whether the blood-fine in the tenth century was one, or two hundreds, in silver. Though in one place we are told that two hundreds were then thought a good price for a man, in another Njal tells his sons that Gunnar, who had just paid him two hundreds in silver, had atoned for the foster-father, Thord Freedman's son, as for *two men*. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the number of hundreds paid was much higher.

in Njal's time was £4 : 10s., rather than £2 : 10s. A man of Njal's worth was surely worth £13 : 10s., and £7 : 10s. would have been too little for him.* We may fairly conclude, that when there was so much money in the island, and when, in every other relation of life, the freeman was valued so highly, the price paid to his family for his loss would have been on the higher rather than on the lower scale.

In conclusion, we may briefly mention the darkest side of this whole inquiry. We have made out the proportion between the silver and the woollen standards, and shown that they stood in the relation of four to one in the tenth century; but unless we can ascertain the proportion in which the woollen standard stood to the necessaries of life at the same date, we shall be unable to fix the true value of the silver standard. Absolutely and intrinsically the silver oz. was worth 4s. 6d., and relatively to the wadmal currency of the tenth century it was worth four times as much as the woollen oz., in which all the dealings of daily life were transacted. But relatively to the nineteenth century, or in other

* Kormak, the passionate lover, valued Steingerda dearer; each of her eyes was worth three hundreds, her hair five hundreds, but all Steingerda was worth England, Ireland, Hunland, Denmark, and Iceland.

words, the amount of goods which could be bought in Iceland for 4s. 6d. in the tenth century, compared with what could be bought there for 4s. 6d. now, would depend entirely on the amount which could be bought then by the ounce of wadmal ;—whatever that might be, four times that amount could be had for the silver ounce. On this point, however, our authorities afford us little information, and we can only conjecture, that the oz. of wadmal in those days was worth about four or five times as much as it is now. A cow in Iceland at the present day is worth one hundred in wadmal, or £1 : 2 : 6, and six wethers may be bought for the same sum. In earlier times, no doubt, four or five cows might have been bought for the same sum, and we shall probably not be wrong if we conclude, that the value of money in Iceland in the tenth century, as compared with what it is now, would be about 8 or 9 to 1, and that the threefold blood-fine which was paid for Njal would have been about equal to £100* at the present day. A sum certainly not too great for one of the wisest and most virtuous men which that island has ever reared.

* If his fine was three times the sum often paid for freemen of position, or six hundreds, this amount would of course be doubled.

INDEX.

Acretongue, cx. I. 123, 174.
Adalsyssla (Aðalsýsla), Esthonia, II. 139.
Æfar, son of Vemund Word-stopper, I. 78.
Æsir the (sing. Ás), xiv, xv, xvi, xxxii.
Affall, the, lxix, lxx, lxxi.
Agdirness, II. 17.
Ágrip cited, II. 395.
Ale-making, cxv.
Alexander quoted, II. 353.
Alfeida, daughter of Weatherlid the Skald, I. 255.
Alftafirth, II. 64, 75, 206, 306.
Allen, Captain Francis, II. 376.
Allotment of land, xlii, xlv.
Allsherjarfè, Allsherjargoði, Allsherjarþing, liv.
Almannagjá, I. 238.
Althing—Alþing, or Allsherjarþing, xlviii, liv, lvi, lvii, lix, lxii, lxv, lxvi, lxxx, lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvii, lxxxviii, xci, xcvi, cxxiv, cxxix, cxxxvii, cxxxix, cxlii, cxliii, cxliv, cxlv, cxlvi, cl, cli, clvii, clxiii; battle at, cxxviii, cxxxvii, cxxxviii, clxvii; booths, cxxxv; the centre of supreme power, lix; change in its constitution, lxiii; the civil and religious capital, lix; established in 930, lxxii; every freeman required to be present, cxxiii; fines for non-attendance (Þingfararkaup), cxxiv; fines awarded, cxxxv; inquests, cxliii, cxliv; the place of meeting, liii, liv; position of the booths at, cxxxi; position of the Thingmen at, cxxx; scenes of violence at, lxi; society, cxxiv; time of meeting, liv.
American continent discovered by the Icelanders, cxvi.
Amund the blind, Hauskuld's son, Njal's son, born blind, II. 88; demands atonement at the Thing from Lyting,

98; his eyes are opened, he slays Lyting, and becomes blind as before, 99; pledges of peace granted to him, 100.
Anglesey, xi. II. 39.
Anglo-Normans, xxix.
Anglo-Saxon law, xxxi; chronicle quoted, II. 360.
Anlaf, or Olaf, II. 383.
Annals of the Four Masters, cxciii.
Annals of Innisfail, cxciii.
Apostle's dog, cxcviii.
Appeal to arms, xxvii.
Ar, or Ask, lord of, or the silent, father of Asgerda, lxxvi. I. 61.
Ari the learned, cxciii. II. 117; preface xi.
Ari Hogni's son sails for Shetland, I. 255.
Ari Mar's son, father of Gudleif, II. 64.
Ari, son of Weatherlid the skald, speaks against Christianity, II. 68.
Arinbjörn, xxxiv.
Aristophanes quoted, xl.
Armann's fell, cxxv.
Armourer's work, cxiii.
Arms articles of traffic, cxviii.
Arnbæl's Oyce, I. 82, 95.
Arnesen quoted, clxx.
Arnesthing, ii.
Arnfin of the Bay, I. 235.
Arnguda Gunnar's sister, wife of Hroar, I. 61; her son, Hamond the Halt, 61.
Arni Kol's son, his name called in Flosi's dream, II. 198; sued by Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, 238; slain by Kari, 271, 272.
Arnkel, Earl of Orkney, II. 383.
Arnljot, Earl Sigurd's steward, II. 13.
Arnljot's son. *See* Kolbein, II. 16.
Arnor Ornolf's son, of Forswaterwood, slain, II. 123.
Arnstacksheath, II. 67, 288, 293.
Arnstein's son, *See* Hroi, II. 221.
Arnvid, Earl of East Gothland, I. 14.
Arran (Herèy), cxci.
"Arvel" feasts, cxv.
Asar Modolf Kettle's son's dwelling, II. 149.
Asbjorn baldpate of Myrka, II. 136.
Asbjorn Eyjangr, son of Bjorn, II. 60.
Asbjorn's son. *See* Surt.
Asbrand, father of Thorbrand, II. 299, 314.
Asbrand Thorleik's son, I. 238; slain by Gunnar, 245.
Asgard, xxvii.
Asgerd, or Asgerda, daughter of Lord Ar or Ask, lxxvi; settles East of Markfleet, lxxvi. Njal's mother, I. 61. II. 298, 299.
Asgerda Thorbjörn's daughter, Gisli Sur's son's sister-in-law, cviii.
Asgrim, son of Aundot the crow, I. 80.

Asgrim Ellidagrim and Jorunna's son, lxxix ; his wife Thorkatla, lxxxvi ; his daughter Thorhalla, lxxxvi ; cousin of Otkell, lxxxvii ; his pride, cv ; his dignity, clxxxvii ; his hall, cvi ; his booth, cxxxvi ; mentioned, cxxxiii, cxxxix. I. 80 ; slays his foster-brother Gauk, 80 ; welcomes Njal and Helgi, 81 ; betroths his daughter, 81 ; gives the bridal feast, 82 ; on Gunnar's side at the Thing, 180 ; suit against Wolf Uggi's son, 193 ; bids Gunnar to come and see him, 194 ; gives Gunnar and his brothers gifts, 195 ; in the award in Thorgeir's suit, 213. II. 129 ; his son Thorhall fostered by Njal, 108 ; Njal's sons come to Tongue, 114 ; he is a friend of Gudmund the powerful and Snorri the priest, 116, 117 ; Njal's sons come again to Tongue, 128 ; he makes them welcome, 129, 130 ; rides with them to the Thing, 131 ; seeks to make friends for them at the Thing, 132-144 ; friend of Gizur the white, 132 ; of Skapti Thorod's son, 133 ; of Snorri the priest, 134 ; of Hafr the wealthy, 136 ; of Gudmund the powerful, 137 ; of Thorkel foulmouth, 138 ; speaks in the suit of manslaughter, 144, 145, 146 ; one of Njal's daysmen, 149 ; he receives Kari after the burning, 195 ; counsels him, offers all help, 196 ; his saying to Kari, 197 ; hears of Gizur's plans, 213 ; Flosi comes to Tongue to humble him, 214-217 ; his reception of Flosi, 215 ; he rides to the Thing, 218 ; keeps peace, 219 ; devises with Gizur, 227 ; seeks friends with Gizur, 228 ; they go to Skapti, who taunts Asgrim with the slaying of Gauk, 230 ; to Gudmund's booth, 233 ; he is at the declarations of the suits of manslaughter on Njal's burning, 235, 238 ; advises with his son Thorhall, 240, 241, 249, 251, 252, 253, 254, 260, 261 ; he and Mord leave the Court, 262 ; they go to the Fifth Court, 263 ; sends to Thorhall, 270 ; joins at the battle at the Althing, 271, 272 ; pursues Flosi, 275 ; wounds Skapti, 276 ; the atonement, 279, 281, 282 ; asks Gudmund to come to Tongue, 284 ; Kari comes to Tongue, his saying to Kari, 317, 318.

Askel the good, son of Thorkettle, II. 221, 239, 258.

Aslak a Viking, II. 379.

Aslak of Longisle fights with Njal's sons, II. 35 ; slain, 36.
Asmund Ashside, father of the sea rover Kol, II. 2.
Asmund the white, II. 335 ; slain, 336.
Asolf, Atli's bowman, slain by Hrut, I. 16.
Asolfskal, a farm given to Bjorn the white, II. 317.
Asser quoted, cxci.
Assessors of the priest of the Court of Laws, lvi.
Astrid of Deepback, a widow, marries Njal's son Grim, I. 80 ; she leaves Bergthorsknoll, II. 174 ; strives to disguise Helgi, 175.
Asvard Gubrand's overseer, II. 19, 20 ; slain by Hrapp, 21.
Asvora, daughter of Thorir, the son of Porridge-Atli, II. 205.
Athelstane, king of England, lii. I. 14. II. 382, 383.
Atli, son of Arnvid, keeps back Hacon's taxes, flees to Gothland and Denmark, I. 14 ; attacked by Hrut, 14 ; slain by Hrut, 16.
Atli's slaying, lxxxv ; burial, xxxiv ; an Eastfirther, at Bergthorsknoll, I. 111 ; slays Kol, 115 ; warned by Njal, 117 ; stays at Bergthorsknoll, 118 ; slain by Brynjolf at Thorolfsfell, 120.
Atli, son of Wolf squint-eye, II. 64.
Atli the strong, II. 115.
Atonement, and pledges of peace, cxl, cxli.
Aud or Unna, the deeply wealthy, daughter of Kettle flatnose, settles in the Western Dales, lxxix ; her son Thorstein the red slain by the Scots, lxxx ; her death, lxxx. I. 2.
Aud, daughter of Eyvind Karf, I. 185 ; mother of Hildigunna and Thraslauga, II. 61, 124.
Aud, daughter of Ivar wide-fathom, mother of Harold Hilditann, I. 78.
Aud, Vestein's daughter, wife of Gísli Súr's son, cviii.
Audulf, an Easterling, sets his heart on Signy Otkell's daughter, I. 169 ; rides with Runolf, 169 ; slain by Gunnar, 176 ; suits on his slaying, 182, 183.
Audun and his white bear, clxxiii-clxxxiii.
Audun the bald, II. 115.
Audun the red, Erling's bowman, II. 366.
Augmund Gunnhillda's waiting-man ; message to Hrut and Auzur, I. 8 ; welcomes them at King's Crag, 11 ; knows Soti, 16 ; tells Gunnhillda, 17.
Augmund Shockhead slain, I. 227.
Auki, a bailiff of King Sweyn, his bargain with Audun, clxxvi, clxxvii.

Auldustein, or Auldastone, lxxvi. I. 61.
Aunund of Witchwood, Egil's brother, I. 185 ; Njal's suit against, 207 ; to be summoned at the suit of Tyrfing, 209 ; rides to the Thing, 210 ; summoned, 238 ; slays Gunnar's hound, 241.
Aunund the fair slain, I. 227.
Aunund wallet-back, II. 118, 157.
Aurgunleid, the son of Geirolf the fighter, II. 16.
Aurlyg, son of Aurlyg, slain by Hrapp, II. 17.
Aurpriest. *See* Wolf.
Autumn court (Leið) held by the three priests of the district, lxvi.
Autumn feasts, cxv.
Auzur of Broaddale, II. 64, 149.
Auzur Hrut's father's brother comes to White River, I. 5, 6 ; sails with Hrut to Norway, 7, 8, 9, 10 ; with Hrut on his cruise, 14 ; at the fight in the Sound, 16 ; return to Iceland, 19 ; at Hrut's wedding, 20 ; his son Sigmund, 23.
Auzur Toti, father of Gunnhillda, I. 7. II. 377.
Auzur, son of Asbjorn Eyjangr, II. 60.
Auzur, son of Hrodlaug, II. 62.
Auzur, son of Aunund wallet-back, II. 157.
Auzur's son. *See* Hroald, II. 157, 171.
Axefirth, iv, vi ; Axefirthers, II. 213, 221, 241, 273.
Axewater, (Öxará), cxxv, cxxvii, cxxix, cxxx, clv. II. 142, 274.
Axewater booths, cxxv, cxxxiv.

Bacon, Antony, II. 376.
Baitvale, II. 217, 218.
Balder, xvi.
Balfour, Mr., of Balfour and Trenaby, xii, cxi. II. 411.
Baltic, I. 89. II. 139.
Banner of Earl Sigurd, cxc.
Baptismal relationship, cxlvii.
Bard the black, I. 235, he sails with Njal sons, II. 7 ; in the fight with Gritgard and Snowcolf, 8, 10.
Bard of the Nip, II. 78, 138.
Bard, son of Jalkettle, II. 115.
Bard Geirmund's neighbour meets Kari, gives him his horse, II. 182, 188.
Bardarstrand, xci ; Bardastrand, II. 73.
Barðr Snæfells Ás. xviii.
Baresarks, xxii. II. 73, 74, 75. *See* Otrygg.
Baudvar or Bödvar (Lord), Viking Kari's son, I. 80, 147. *See* Thorstein, II. 62.
Baug, foster brother of Kettle hæing, lxix ; said to have been an Irishman, lxxii ; his sons, lxxii ; they are banished from Fleetlithe, lxxiii ; his house at Fleetlithe, lxxv.

Baugagil, I. 55.
Baula, v.
Bay, the (Vík), I. 8, 82, 85. II. 2.
Bearfirth, I. 34, 38, 39, 40, 51, 118.
Bear-isles, I. 31, 37.
Beer drunk at the sacred feasts, xl.
Bergen, I. 7.
Bergliot, daughter of Earl Thorir, mother of Hacon the bad, I. 84.
Bergliota, Earl Hacon's kinswoman, I. 95.
Bergthora Skarphedinn's daughter, I. 62 ; wife of Njal, her quarrel with Hallgerda mentioned, lxxxv, lxxxvi ; name mentioned, cxv, cxviii ; her love for her husband, clxxxvi ; waits upon the guests at Gunnar's wedding, I. 101, 103 ; tells Hallgerda to give place to Thorhalla, 106 ; saying on Swart's atonement, 111 ; takes in Atli, 111, 112 ; tells him to slay Kol, 113 ; sends him to Thorolfsfell, 119 ; tells Njal she will avenge Atli, 121 ; tells Thord to slay Brynjolf, 123 ; sends Thord to Thorolfsfell, 130 ; saying to Hallgerda on Thord's slaying, 132 ; hears of Hallgerda's mocking, 139 ; counsels Njal to send food to Lithend, 150 ; taunts her sons for being slow in avenging Hallgerda's insults, II. 47 ; tells them of Thrain and his band, 50 ; she and Hildigunna agree, 87 ; she urges her sons to avenge Hauskuld's slaying, 93 ; talks to Njal, 109 ; Saevuna's spaedom, 162 ; she tells her household to choose their meat, 167 ; Flosi offers to save her life, 175 ; she shares Njal's fate, 176, 181 ; her body found after the burning, 193 ; Kari often speaks of her, 198 ; name mentioned in declaration of suits, 229, 237.
Bergthorsknoll, Njal's dwelling, ii, xix, lxix, lxx, lxxi, lxxvii, xcvi. I. 61, 83, 100, 132, 206, 236. II. 40, 41, 50, 68, 75, 87, 88, 91, 96, 102, 103, 108, 159, 162, 166, 168, 192, 195, 237.
Bersastede, II. 202.
Bersi the wise, II. 202, 205, 274.
Berufirth, II. 34, 64, 201.
Beruness, II. 64.
Beruwick, II. 345.
Betrothals Icelandic, *see* Unna and Hallgerda.
Biarmaland (Permia), I. 83. II. 378, 380.
Biartey, Hroald's mother, I. 248.
Biorn Gullbera of Reykriverdale or Reykiardale, I. 5 ; his son Thiostolf, 5, 29.

Bishops members of the Court of Laws, lxvii.
Bishop's residence, cxxi.
Bishop's booth, cxxxiv.
Bishop's-tongue, II. 218.
Biskupa Sögur, Kaupmannahöfn 1858, quoted, xci. II. 357.
Bitrufirth, iv.
Bjalfi, freedman of Asgerda, Njal's mother, II. 298, 299.
Bjarni Skeggbroddi's son's eldhus, xcix ; called Longhouse, xcix.
Bjarni Brodhelgi's son, cxxxi, cxxxii ; dwells at Hof ; his welcome to Flosi ; refuses to take money for his aid, II. 204 ; has to wife Rannveiga, 205 ; Flosi comes to his booth at the Thing ; he counsels Flosi 220, 221 ; he praises him, 222 ; he seeks Eyjolf, 223 ; he says Flosi and Eyjolf have done well in giving and receiving the gold arm ring, 225 ; he goes to Flosi's booth, 226 ; he fights with Kari at the Althing, 273 ; and escapes, 273.
Bjorn butter-carrier, son of Hroald, II. 116.
Bjorn boun, the rough-footed, son of Grim, lord of Sogn, in Norway, I. 2, 80, 147; II. 60, 115.
Bjorn Helgi's son, II. 60.
Bjorn ironside, son of Ragnar hairybreeks, II. 116.
Bjorn the chapman, II. 381.
Bjorn the white, son of Kadal of the Mark, cxi, cxix, clxxxvii. II. 298 ; Kari comes to him, he is fond of boasting, 300 ; agrees to harbour Kari, 300 ; meets the sons of Sigfus, 304 ; Kari praises him, 305 ; he rides east with Kari, 306, 307 ; he helps Kari ; wounds three men, 310 ; watches while Kari sleeps, 312 ; chooses to stay with Kari, 312 ; wishes to slay Kettle of the Mark, 314 ; comes home to Mark ; Kari praises his courage to his wife, 316 ; Kari begs the farm of Asolfskal for him ; Thorgeir protects him, 317.
Bjornness, II. 200, 301.
Bjornolf, son of Grim hairycheek, II. 78, 139.
Bláfell, v.
Blandá, vi ; Blandwater, vi.
Bleing is talked to by Bjarni, II. 221.
Blood-bowl (hlautbolli) xxxviii.
Blood-feuds, xxx, cxlii.
Bluewoodheath, I. 70. II. 70.
Blundkettle, the burning of, lx ; in Hænsa Þórir's Saga, cxii. ; the great case of fire-raising before Njal's time, cxii, cxiii ; burning, clxxxix.
Bodvar. *See* Baudvar.
Boiling Kettle Vellankatla, II. 77.

Bolverk the son of Eyjolf the guileful, II. 219.
Bolverk's son. *See* Eyjolf.
Book of the Law (Grágás) cxxix.
Booths at the Althing, cxxxv.
Borgarfirth, iii, iv, vi. I. 20, 45, 65 ; men of, their booths at the Althing, cxxx, cxxxix.
Borgarhaven, II. 66, 302.
Bork the waxytoothed-blade, son of Thorkell clubfoot, I. 185.
Bork Starkad's son, I. 185 ; at Knafahills, 202 ; slain by Gunnar, 204.
Boroimhe. *See* Brian.
Borumha, a town in Ireland, cxciii.
Bothnia, Gulf of, II. 139.
Bower (or Dýngja), ladies chamber, cvii.
Bowman, lxxiv.
Bragi, the god of history, song and mirth, xli.
" Bragi's cup," xli.
Brand Gneisti's son, II. 342.
Brandr, Bishop, preface xii.
Breiðabolstede, Breiðabolstaðr, west of Markfleet, lxix, lxx, lxxii.
Bretland (Wales), clxxxiv.
Brian King, Boroimhe, clxxxix, cxc, cxcii, cxciii, cxciv ; his death, cxcvii ; at Connaught (Kincora), in Ireland—his sons—his wife, II. 323 ; King Sigtrygg and Earl Sigurd go to war with him, 327 ; the Vikings Brodir and Ospak, 328 ; Ospak joins Brian, 329, 332 ; Brian's battle, 333-338 ; he is slain by the Viking Brodir, 337 ; his death told to Flosi in the Southern isles, 343.
" Brian's battle," xcvii, cxiv, clxxxix, cxci, cxciii-cxcvii.
Bribery, cliii.
Bridge of timber over Axe-water, cxxix.
Bridgewater (Brúará), lxxix, cxxix. II. 218.
Brinkbooth (Hlaðbuð), cxxxviii.
British Isles, xii, cxviii.
Broaddale, II. 16, 64, 201.
Broaddale's heath, II. 202.
Broadfirth (Breiðifjörðr), iii, iv, xxxvi. I. 31, 74.
Broadfirthdales, I. 1.
Broadfirth chiefs, their booths at the Althing, cxxxi.
Broadfirther's Quarter, lxi.
Broadshield Mountain, liii, liv.
Broadwater, II. 149.
Broddhelgi, the son of Thorgil, II. 204 ; his pedigree, 204, 205.
Broddhelgi's sons, II. 201, 203, 204, 205, 220. *See* Saurli and Bjarni.
Brodir the Viking, clxxxix, cxc, cxciv, cxcvii ; he lies off the coast of Man, II. 328 ; once a Christian, he has thrown off the faith and become a sorcerer, his aspect, 329 ; he wishes Ospak to join him against Brian, 329 ;

the wonders in his ship, 330-332 ; Ospak tells him what these wonders bode, 331 ; he comes to Dublin against Brian, 332 ; his spells, 333 ; he is in the battle, 334, 335 ; escapes unhurt, 335 ; rushes on Brian, 337 ; slays Brian, 337 ; he is slain, 337 ; Flosi hears of his death, 343.
Bruni Hallidi's son, II. 277.
Brynhilda in Sæmund's Edda, cix.
Brynjolf the unruly, xxxiv, lxxxv ; a baseborn son of Swan, comes to Lithend from Bearfirth, I. 118 ; slays Atli, 120 ; slain by Thord, 123, 124.
Brynjulfsson, clxxi. *See* Gísli.
Buildings of the Icelanders, description of, xcviii.
Bulandsness, II. 71.
Bulgarians and the Northmen, x.
Burial place at the Althing, cxxxv.
Burial, rights of, xxxiv, cxxi-cxxiii.
Burners, 120 in number, xcvi ; their banishment, xcvi ; fifteen killed in Brian's battle, lxxvii, xcvii, cxii, cxxviii, cxxxiii, cxxxvii, cxxxviii, clxvii, clxxiii, cxci, cxcv.
Burning of Blundkettle, lx, cxii, clxxxix.
Burning-Flosi. *See* Flosi.
Burnt Njal. *See* Njal.
Byre (Fjós), xcviii.
Byrgir's booth at the Althing, cxxxiv, cxxxvii. II. 217.
Byzantium, x, xxix.

Cairns, cxxii.
Caithness, xcvii, cxiv, cxcvi. II. 14, 326, 338, 347.
Calffell, II. 66, 200.
Canterbury, cxciii.
Cantyre, II. 39.
Canute Sweyn's son, king of England, II. 361, 408.
Carlinedale, II. 67, 285, 288.
Carlinedale-water, II. 288.
Carvings, cvi.
Cattegat, clxxiv. I. 82.
Cattle rearing, cxi.
Cavendish, Captain, arrival in the Thames, II. 376.
Ceann Coradh (Kincora), palace of Brian, cxcii.
Celtic names of many Icelanders, cxcii.
Change of faith, xxvi, lxxxiii, xc, cxxxv, clx, clxxxix.
Charcoal, cxi.
Charlemagne, ix.
Christ, clxx. II. 72, 123.
Christians and Christianity, viii, xiii, xxvi, xxix, xl, lviii, xci, cxxiv, cxxxv, clxviii, clxix, clxxxiv, clxxxviii, clxxxix, cxci, cxciii, cxciv, cxcviii. II. 66, 67, 68, 72, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 172, 329.
Christiania Firth, I. 82. II. 2.
Christmas day, xcvi.
Chronology and Outline of the

Story, lxxxi-xcviii; Icelandic chronology, ccii-cciv.
Church and State, xlvi, lv.
Civilization in Norway, ix.
Cleasby, Richard, Dictionary quoted, clii; preface xvii.
Climate, cxv.
Clontarf, the great fight at, xcvii, clxxxix, cxciii, cxciv, cxcviii.
Cloth cargoes, cxviii.
Codcatcher. *See* Thorstein, II. 117.
Code of laws, lii; Ulfljot's, lviii, lxxxii.
Coll, II. 39.
Commerce, cxviii.
Commonwealth, li, lii, liii, liv, lix, cxxix.
Compensations (bót), xxxi.
Conal's son, II. 233. *See* Einar Gudmund's foster son.
Connaught, II. 323, 332.
Constantinople (Micklegarth, the Great Town), I. 256.
Constitution of Iceland, lxiv, cxl.
Cork, the Northmen in, cxcii.
Corn grown in Iceland, cx.
Court of Appeal, clviii.
Court of Execution, Fèránsdómr, clxi, clxii, clxiv, clxv.
Court of Laws, or Lögretta, lv. lvi, lx, lxi, lxiii, lxvi, lxvii, cxxviii, cxxxiii, cxxxv, cxxxvi, cxxxvii, cxl, cxlvi, clx.
Court. *See* Quarter Court and Fifth Court.
Courts of the priests, lix.
Craggeir. *See* Thorgeir.
Creed of the Northmen, xiv.
Crete, II. 369.
Crossfell, I. 55.
Crosswater, or Thverá lxviii.
Crosswick, xcix. II. 205.
Culdee anchorites, vii.

Dala-Kolli, or Dalakoll, father of Hauskuld, a Norwegian, marries Thorgerda, lxxx, lxxxviii. I. 1.
Dale, Gudbrand's homestead in Norway, II. 18, 22.
Dale, the, Runolf's dwelling, lxxviii. I. 168. II. 48, 49, 52, 119, 146, 148, 149.
Dale country, iii, xxxix, lxxx, lxxxviii.
Dale priesthood, their booths at the Althing, lxxvii, cxxx.
Dales, I. 20, 25, 168, 172, 223. II. 14.
Dale-dwellers, lxxxii, cxxx. II. 131.
Daurrud, cxiv; origin of the name, cxcvi; what he saw in Caithness, II. 338, 341.
David the white takes Kari into his house in the Fair Isle, II. 322; comes to Hrossey with Kari, 325; goes with Kari to Wales and to Rome, 344; Kari gives him a ship; he goes home to the Fair Isle, 347.
Daysmen, or arbitrators, clxvii. II. 149.

Dead, duties to the, cxxi, cxxiii.
Debts for goods, cxviii.
Denmark, civ, clxxii, clxxiv, clxxviii, clxxxiii. I. 13, 89, 256. II. 4.
Dicuilus, an Irish monk, his work, De Mensurâ Orbis, vii, viii.
Dipwater, "Washwater" (Thvátt-water), xc.
Dísir the Goddesses, the fetches, xx.
Divorce, cxix.
Domald the Swedish King, xxxix.
Dover, II. 347.
Dowery, xxvii.
Drángey, or the Drongs, iv.
Dreams, xxiii.
Drinking Hall, xiii.
Drontheim, lxxvi. I. 94. II. 1, 5, 15, 16, 301.
Droplaugarsonar Saga quoted, xcviii.
Droplaug's son. *See* Helgi, II. 62.
Drunkenness, cxv.
Dublin, xcvii, cxcii, cxciii, cxciv. II. 328, 332, 333, 371-376.
Duel, xxviii, cxxxii, clviii.
Dufthak, xxi.
Dufthaksholt, xxi.
Duncan, King Brián's son, 323.
Duncansby, II. 8, 14.
Duncansness, II. 14.
Dungal, King of Man's son, II. 39.
Dwelling-houses, construction of, ci.
Dýrafirth, iii.
Dyrholaey, i, v.
Dyrholms, II. 41, 68, 160, 190.

Easter, clxxviii. II. 80.
"Easterling," *i. e.*, Norwegian, cvii. I. 83. II. 18, 302.
East Firths, iv. II. 75.
Eastfirthers (Court) (Quarter), lxi, cxxx, cxxxiii, cxxxiv, cxxxix. I. 67. II. 217, 235, 239, 241, 243, 245, 246, 256, 260, 273, 277.
Edmund, king of England, II. 383.
Egil Skallagrim's son, his abode, iii; his booth, cxxxvi.
Egil's son. *See* Sveinbjorn.
Egil's Saga, xxi, xxxiii, xxxiv, c; preface xiii.
Egil, son of Kol, I. 185; dwells at Sandgil, 185; his sons, they side with Starkad's sons, 185; they come to Threecorner, 186; has two Easterlings as guests, 186; at the horse fight, 190; summoned to attack Gunnar, 196; musters fifteen men, and Thorir the Easterling, 196; slain by Gunnar, 203; his blood feud, 207; atonement, 213.
Egil, Earl Hacon's banner bearer, slain by Helgi, II. 36.
Egil Flosi's brother, II. 61; slays Arnor Ornolf's son, of Fors-

waterwood, 123; his son Kolbein, 118; his daughter Thraslauga marries Ingialld of the Springs, 124; is with his brother Flosi at the Thing, 158.
Egil Hall of the Side's son, II. 62.
Egilsha, cells at, viii.
Eilif the eagle, son of Bard, II. 115.
Einar the Shetlander, I. 255.
Einar, son of Audun the bald, II. 115.
Einar of Thvera, brother of Gudmund, stands by Njal's sons, II. 144; Asgrim tells him how the suit stands, 145; at the Quarter Court, 146; he prays Flosi to take atonement, 148; one of Njal's daysmen, 150.
Einar Conal's son, Gudmund's foster-child, II. 233.
Eldborg, v.
Elda, II. 7, 134.
Eldgrim slain by Hrut, lxxx.
Ellidi, Kettlebjorn's ship, lxxviii.
Ellidagrim settles on Teit's estates and marries Jorunna, lxxix; his son Asgrim, lxxix, lxxxvii. I. 80. II. 108, 114, 116, 117, 128, 146, 149, 195, 218, 227, 233, 238, 251, 272, 282, 317. *See* Asgrim.
Ellidaros near Reykjavik, cxxv.
Elves, xviii.
Engey island, belonging to Olof's sons, I. 44; shared by Glum and Thorarin, 50.
England, lxxxviii, clxxii, clxxxiv. I. 17. II. 347.
Enhallow, cells at, viii.
"Eres, The," or beaches (Eyrar), cxviii.
Eric Bloodaxe, King, xxxiii, xxxiv; son of Harold fair-hair, I. 7. II. 360; he meets Gunnhillda in Finnmark, 378-381; dates of birth and death, 380, 381; his flight to England, 382; his Viking cruizes, 382; death, 383.
"Eric's Death Song," II. 384-387.
Eric the red, cxvi.
Eric, son of Earl Hacon, speaks for Thrain, II. 3; gets him a pilot, 4; speaks again for Thrain, 5; tells the Earl that he ought not to bind Kari; he makes atonement for the Earl with Njal's sons, 38; makes a feast for Kari, 39.
Eric, Earl, of Norway, II. 346.
Eric of Gooddale, son of Geirmund, his son Thorkel, II. 136; his son Thorgeir, 205.
Eric frizzlebeard, who felled Gritgarth, II. 136, 205.
Erlend of Orkney, II. 383.
Erling Rognvald's kinsman, II. 363.

Erling of Straumey, II. 333 ; slain in Brian's battle, 338.
Erse king. *See* Kjarval and Moorkjartan, II. 115, 116.
Espihole, II. 61.
Esthonia (Aðalsýsla), I. 89.
Ethelred, King, II. 360.
Execution Island, cxxxii.
Eydis ironsword, II. 137.
Eyjafalla Jökul, or Eyjafell, ii, lxviii, lxx, lxxvi. II. 50, 159, 165, 208, 285, 304, 307.
Eyjafirth, iv, lxi, lxii, cxxxi. I. 65, 66. II. 61, 86, 115.
Eyjangr. *See* Asbjorn.
Eyjolf the guileful, father of Bolverk, II. 219.
Eyjolf, the son of Einar, II. 115.
Eyjolf Bolverk's son, cxxxi, cxxxii, cxxxiii, cxxxvi, cxxxviii, clvii ; summoned in Flosi's dream, II. 198 ; well skilled in law, 219, 221 ; Flosi and Bjarni come to see him at his booth at the Thing, 223 ; they ask his aid in defending the suit against Flosi, 223 ; he refuses at first, 224 ; but afterwards accepts a gold arm ring, and undertakes the defence, 225 ; the ring is seen by Snorri the priest, 226, 227 ; he watches the opening of the case at the Hill of Laws, 238, 239 ; he advises Flosi to part with his priesthood and enter another Thing, 239 ; his scheme appears to succeed, 241 ; he challenges the inquest, 248 ; is foiled by Thorhall Asgrim's son, 249 ; he challenges the inquest on a different ground, 250, 251 ; is again foiled by Thorhall, 251, 252 ; he consults Skapti, the Speaker of the Law, 252 ; he challenges the inquest a third time, 253 ; is again foiled by Thorhall, 254 ; sends once more to the Lawman, 255 ; his scheme for the defence brought forward, 258, 259 ; he forbids the judges to utter judgment, 259 ; he is foiled by Thorhall, who tells Mord to summon them to the Fifth Court for contempt of the Thing, as a bribe had been taken, 260, 261 ; he summons Mord for contempt of the Thing, by informally conducting the case, 262 ; he watches for any flaw in Mord's proceedings, 266, 268 ; he sees Mord's blunder, and takes witness that the cause has now come to naught, 269 ; his opponents appeal to arms, 270 ; he is slain by Kari, 278 ; no fine is awarded for his slaying, 283.
Eyjolf nosy; a Drontheim man, sells his ship to Flosi, II.

301 ; he is helped to his wife, 302.
Eyjulf summoned to attack Gunnar, I. 238.
Eylif Aurund's son wounded by Gunnar, I. 243.
Eyrar, vi, cxviii. II. 40, 76, 134, 229, 318. *See* Eres.
Eyrbyggja Saga quoted, xxxvi.
Eystein the noisy, II. 11 ; father of Rognvald, Earl of Mæren, 62.
Eyvalld, the son of Oxen-Thorir, II. 204.
Eyvind Hrut's brother, I. 6.
Eyvind Karf, one of the first settlers in Iceland, I. 185 ; his daughter Aud, or Unna, II. 61, 124.
Eyvind, son of Baug, lxxii.
Eyvind the Easterling, father of Helgi, II. 115.
Eyvind Thorkel's son, II. 221.

"Fagrskinna" quoted, ciii. II. 381, 384.
Fair Isle, the, II. 322, 347.
Farm buildings of the Icelanders, xcviii.
Faroe Islands, viii, x, xi. I. 148. II. 63, 342.
Faxafirth, ii, iii.
Fellcombe, II. 66.
Fetches, xviii.
Feuds, blood, xxx, lxi, lxxii.
"Fey," or death doomed, xix.
Fiddle Mord. *See* Mord.
Field, the Upper, at Thingvalla, II. 217.
Fifth Court (Fimtardóm), xciii, cxxxiii, clvii, clix, clx, clxx.
Fines, xxxi, cxxiv.
Finngálkn, II. 139.
Finnish coast, II. 139. Wizards, 378.
Finns, clxix.
Finnleik the Scottish Earl, cxc.
Fire, holy, xxxviii.
Fishless, I. 51.
Fishwaters, II. 165, 189.
Fitje battle, II. 387.
Fjörbaug or fine, clxii.
Fjörbaugsmenn, clxvii.
Flatey book cited, II. 395, 397
Fleet, I. 130. II. 50, 52, 53, 56.
Fleetdale, II. 205, 206.
Fleetlithe, lxxii, lxxiii, lxxv, lxxxi, xci. I. 114, 141, 170. II. 68, 166, 187, 189, 190, 208, 214, 284, 292, 303, 305.
Fleetmen, II. 116.
Flói, lxxv, cxviii.
Flosi, son of Thord Freyspreist, v, liii, lxxi, xcii, xcvi, xcvii, xcviii, xcix c, cv, cvi, cxii, cxvii, cxviii, cxxviii, cxxx, cxxxi, cxxxiii, cliv, clvii, clxxiii, clxxxix, cxci, cxcv, cxcix. II. 60 ; his pedigree, 60, 61 ; has to wife Steinvora, daughter of Hall of the Side, 60 ; dwells at Swinefell, 61 ; his brothers, 61 ; Njal seeks Flosi's brother's daughter Hildigunna as wife for his

foster son Hauskuld, 81, 82; his answer to Njal, 82; Njal comes again to Swinefell and he keeps faith with him, 87; Hildigunna is married to Hauskuld; he pays her dower, 87; he takes the sign of the cross, 66; Hauskuld comes to Swinefell, 107; he gives him a scarlet cloak, 108, 110; he hears of his slaying, 117; summons his friends Hall, Ljot, Kol, Glum, and Modolf; he rides to Kirkby to Surt, sends for Kolbein to Headbrink for Thorgrim, 118; to Solheim Lodmund's dwelling, thence to Runolf's of the Dale, 119, 120; advises with Runolf; is told the story of Hauskuld's slaying, 120; rides to Ossaby, 120; Hildigunna prepares for his coming, 121; he is urged to take blood vengeance by Hildigunna, 122; the cloak covered with Hauskuld's gore thrown over him, 123; his anger; rides to Holtford; Ingialld comes to him, 124; he meets the sons of Sigfus, 125, 126; hears their story of Hauskuld's slaying, and Kettle tells him he wishes for peace, the others for outlawry and death, 126; his reproof to Grani; Mord Valgard's son joins him, 127; they ride to the Thing, 128-131; Hall of the Side joins him, 131; he refuses an atonement; his friends at the Thing, 146; hears of Mord Valgard's son being at Hauskuld's slaying, the suit comes to naught, 147; he agrees to be atoned, 149; names his daysmen, 149; shakes hands with Njal, 150; he goes to the Court of Laws with the sons of Sigfus, 153; looks at the blood-money and gifts, takes up Njal's scarf, and insults Njal and Njal's sons, 154; spurns the money, and will neither give nor take peace, 155; summons all his men to the Great Rift, 156; plans an attack on Njal and Njal's sons, 157; his friends Kol, Hroald, Auzur, Thorstein, Glum, Modolf, Thorir, Kolbein, Egil, Kettle, Mord (Sigfus' son), Ingialld, Thorkel, Lambi, Grani, Gunnar, Sigurd, and Hroar, they swear an oath not to shrink from the quarrel, 157, 158; Flosi is chosen leader, 158; he counsels them to go home for the summer and join him eight weeks before winter, 158, 159; he goes home to Swinefell, 160; portents, 164; he leaves

Swinefell, 164 ; rides to Threecorner ridge, 165 ; he is heard of by Njal's sons, 166 ; comes to Bergthorsknoll, 168, 169 ; his band surrounds the homestead, 171 ; he commands them to lay fire to the house, 172 ; refuses to take atonement from Njal's sons, 174 ; he suffers the women and house carles to leave the burning house, 174, 175 ; he slays Helgi, Njal's son, 175 ; offers to spare Njal and Bergthora, 175, 176 ; he tells his band to cease shooting, 177 ; stays by the burning house till daybreak ; his saying to Geirmund, 181 ; hears of Kari's escape, 182 ; his saying on Modolf's song, 183 ; he takes to horse and rides to the Springs, 184 ; meets Ingialld—offers to make an award for him—is refused, 185 ; he launches a spear at Ingialld, 186 ; rides to Threecorner ridge, 187 ; Thorgeir's opinion of him, 190 ; he and his men see their pursuers return home, 191 ; he counsels his men to go east to Swinefell, 191 ; is at home all winter, 192 ; suit of manslaughter to be set on foot against Flosi, 196 ; his dream—he tells it to Kettle, 198 ; he leaves Swinefell and asks for help —his walking dress—they go east to Knapvale, Broadwater, Calffell, Staffell, and Thvattwater, 200 ; Hall's welcome and counsel, 201 ; he gives Hallbjorn money—goes to Broaddale's heath and Rafnkelstede, Hrafn's welcome—he fares thence to Bersastede, 202 ; is welcomed by Holmstein, 203 ; thence to Waltheofstede, welcomed but refused aid, his saying to Saurli that a woman rules the house, thence to Njordwick, 203 ; meets with a hearty welcome from Thorkel and Thorwalld, he pays them to stand by him ; fares thence to Hof, Bjarni welcomes him, 204 ; thence to Crosswick, Thorkel Geiti's son agrees to stand by him, thence to Weaponfirth and back to Holmstein's, 205 ; he fares thence up Fleetdale by Oxenlava, Swinehorndale, and Alftafirth to Thvattwater; Hall's house—his father-in-law's counsel and gifts ; returns home to Swinefell, 206 ; his journey spoken of, 208, 209, 214 ; he rides to the Thing with one hundred and twenty men, 214 ; rides to Tongue and insults Asgrim, 214-217 ; fares

thence to Laugarwater, Baitvale, and thence to the Upper Field; he tells Hall of his doings at Tongue, 217; it is spoken of by Asgrim, 218; he goes to Bjarni's booth, 220; his advice, 220, 221; they go to the booths of the Axefirthers, 221, and men of Lightwater, 222; he buys their aid, 222; thence to the Hladbooth, and find Eyjolf, 223; he bribes Eyjolf, 225; returns to his own booth, 226; the bribery talked of, 227; Mord declares a suit against him at the Hill of Laws, 235-239; his saying to Eyjolf, 238; is advised to part with his priesthood and join Askel's Thing, 239; Mord's proceedings against him in the Quarter Court, 242-258; his defence by Eyjolf, 258, 259; Mord summons him at the Hill of Laws to the Fifth Court for bribery, 261; proceedings against him in the Fifth Court, 261-269; Eyjolf's defence of him at the Hill of Laws, 263, 266, 268, 269; an onslaught made upon his band by Thorhall and Asgrim, 271; he gives way, 273; makes for the Great Rift, 274; his men fly across the Axewater, 275; Snorri taunts him, 275; he slays Bruni, 277; Hall parts the fighters, 278; an atonement asked for, 279; Flosi takes the atonement, 282; he and the other burners are exiled, 283; they ride east to Fleetlithe, 284; and he rides home to Swinefell; he receives Kettle and the surviving burners, 291; he is atoned with Thorgeir, 292-297; buys a ship, 302; fits her out, 303; is from home when Kettle flies from Kari, 310; he rides east to Hornfirth, 319; sails—the ship is wrecked on the Orkneys, 320; gives himself up to Earl Sigurd—an atonement taken, 321; he becomes the Earl's henchman, 322; at Earl Sigurd's Yule feast, 325; he intercedes for Kari, 326; tells the story of the burning, 327; he sails with Earl Gilli to the southern isles, 333; hears of the death of his friends in Brian's battle, 343; goes to Wales, 343; hears of Kol's slaying, buries him with honour, 345; begins a pilgrimage to Rome, 346; gets absolution from the Pope, 346; fares to Norway, thence to Iceland, 346; Kari is shipwrecked, he makes him welcome at Swine-

fell; they are atoned; he gives him Hildigunna to wife; he sails to Norway, and is lost in the home coming, 348.
Flosi, Kari's son, II. 348.
Flosi's lág, lxxi.
Fodder, cxi.
Fold, II. 2.
Foremen (reifingarmenn), cl, clxxi.
Foresighted men, xxiii.
Fornaldar Sögur quoted, xliii. II. 360.
Fornmanna Sögur quoted, II. 139.
Forspár, or Framsýnn, xxiii.
Forswaterwood, II. 123.
Fóstbræðra Saga, c.
Fostering, xxv.
France, the Northmen in, ix.
Freeman's churchyard, cxxxv.
Freedmanson. *See* Thord.
Frey, xviii, xli, lviii.
Freyfax, xviii.
Freyja, the goddess of love and beauty, xli. II. 71.
Freyspriest, clxiii. *See* Thord.
Fridgerda, daughter of Kjarval the Erse king, II. 116.
Fulilæk or Jökul-water vi.
Funeral rites, cxxii.
Fylgja (pl. fylgjur), fetch or guardian spirit, xix.

GAIRSAY, II. 370.
Galloway. *See* Earl Malcolm, xcvii.
Games, lxxiii.
Gardar, I. 61.
Gauk Trandil's son, Asgrim's foster brother, I. 80; slain by Asgrim, 80. II. 230.
Gaul, cxcii.
Gaulardale, II. 63.
Gautawick, II. 16, 34, 64.
Geilastofna, I. 174.
Geir the Priest, son of Thorgerda, lxxix; cousin of Otkell, lxxxvii; his booth, cxxxvi, cxlii. I. 147; dwells at Lithe, 147; message from Otkell, 159-60; Skamkell's answer, 162; declares its untruth, 162; has the blood feud after Otkell, 178; undertakes the suit, 179; he and Gunnar strive at the Thing, 181, 184, 187; gives pledges of peace to Gunnar, 184; rides to the Thing, 210; summoned by Gizur, 238; comes to Hof, 240; to the Point, 248; remains with Thorgeir, 248; his son Hroald, 248; makes peace with Hogni, and dwells at Lithe, 255.
Geirmund, the son of Hroald, II. 136, 205.
Geirmund, II. 181, a kinsman of Sigfus' sons, comes to Bergthorsknoll at the Burning, tells Flosi of Kari's escape, 182, 188.
Geirolf the fighter, II. 16.
Gelling. *See* Thorgeir.
Gellir Thord, lxi. *See* Thord.

Geitahellna, II. 201.
Geiti's son, II. 62, 205, 220, 255, 274, 277. *See* Thorkel.
Gerfinn the red, the son of Solvi, II. 124.
Gerleif, II. 61, 158, 238, 309. *See* Thorstein
Gerleif, son of Aunuud walletback, II. 118.
Gest Oddleif's son dwells at Hagi, xci.; gives Thangbrand a feast, II. 73; baptized by Thangbrand, 74, 75.
Geysers, cxxxix.
Giants, xiv, xviii.
Gifts, xliv, xlv.
Gilli, Earl of the Southern Isles, cvi; renders scatts to Earl Sigurd, II. 12; receives Njal's sons well, 39; marries Earl Sigurd's sister, 40; comes to the Orkneys at Yule to Earl Sigurd, 324; takes Flosi back to the Southern Isles, 333; his dream of Brian's battle, 342.
Gils marries Thordisa, heiress of Guðlaugr, cxxxix.
Gilsfirth, iii, iv.
Gísli Brynjulfsson quoted, clxxi.
Gísli Súr's son (an outlaw), a famous skald, iii; has an eldhus at Hól, xcix; slays Thorgrim, the husband of Thordisa, cii, ciii; house, cvii, cviii, cix, cxi, cxiii; buries Vestein, cxxii, cxxiii; his Saga quoted, xxxiii, xcviii, cii, cvi, cviii, cxxii. II. 117.
Gizur the white, of Mossfell, first cousin of Otkell, xl, lxxix, lxxxvii; his strife with Gunnar, lxxxvii; his daughter Thorkatla, lxxxix; he goes to Norway with Hjallti Skeggi's son, xci; his booth, cxxxvi, cxlii; his good counsel, clxxxvii. Teit's son, I. 146; his son, Bishop Isleif, 147; Geir and Gizur friends, 147; sent to by Otkell, 159, 160, 162; in Otkell's suit at the Thing, 165, 168; offers Gunnar the award, 166; pleads for Otkell, 167; has the blood feud after Otkell, 178; fears to attack Gunnar, 179; at the Thing, 181; agrees to an award, 183; he is spoken of by Egil's sons, 187; his daughter asked in marriage, 208; rides to the Thing, 210; gives notice of Thorgeir's manslaughter, 230; takes the suit in hand at the Thing, 231, 232; gives notice of Gunnar's outlawry, 237; plan to slay Gunnar, 238; comes to Hof, seizes Thorkell, 240; attacks Lithend, 243; will not burn the house, 244; on Gunnar's death, 247; returns to Mossfell, 248; fares abroad, II. 71; he gives pledges to Olaf for the Icelanders,

76; comes back to Iceland, 76; rides to the Thing to support the Christians, 77; he puts up in the Mossfell booths, 78; Mord consults him, 127; his daughter marries Mord, 128; stands by Njal and his sons, 132, 144, 145, 146; he prays Flosi to take an atonement, 148; he is one of Njal's daysmen, 150, 151; he takes charge of Hauskuld's blood-money, 156; advises Asgrim, 196, 197; welcomes Thorhall and Kari, 207; his counsel and plans, 208, 209, 213; meets Thorgeir and others at Baitvale, 218; his counsels in the suit against Flosi, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 233, 235, 241, 268, 269; in the Thing battle, 272, 273, 275; speaks of atonement, 282, 284; asks Gudmund to come to Mossfell, 284; gives Kari a sword at parting, 318.

Glum, son of Olof the Halt, xxxiv, lxxxiii, lxxxiv, cxiii, cxx, cxli; lives with Thorarin, I. 44; woos Hallgerda, 45; warned, 45; seeks her in marriage, 46-49; his wealth, 49; his wedding, 49; his daughter Thorgerda, 50; his home at Varmalek, 50, 51; Thiostolf at Varmalek, 53; he smites Hallgerda, 54; slain by Thiostolf, 56, 57, 58.

Glum Hilldir's son, at Borgarhaven, II. 66; Flosi claims his aid, 118; stands by Flosi, 158; he is at Njal's burning, 183; wakes Flosi from his dream, 198; he is called in Flosi's dream, 199; his strength, saves Flosi's life at Tongue, 216; suit against for firing Njal's house, 237; exiled, 283; slain by Kari and Bjorn, 314.

Godalands Jokul, lxx.

Godaland, II. 159, 165, 189, 285, 300.

Goddesses Dísir, xx.

Godred, King of Man, conquered by Kari and Njal's sons, II. 15; defeated by Njal's sons, 39.

Gollnir. *See* Thorgeir Gelling, II. 183.

Gooddale. *See* Eric, II. 136, 205.

Good Friday, cxciv, cxcv, cxcviii. II. 333, 342.

Goose sand, II. 300, 304.

Gorm's son. *See* King Harold, clxxii.

Göta-Elf, I. 82, 246. II. 2.

Gothland, I. 14.

Gottenburg, I. 82.

Governor's booth, cxxxvi, cxxxvii.

Grágás or Greygoose code of laws quoted, c, cxxix, cxliii, clii. II. 401-403, 406.

Grain grown in Iceland at the present day, cxi.

Grani Gunnar of Lithend's son,

I. 190, 235, 239 ; goes with Hallgerda, 249. Thrain's companion, II. 44 ; goes with Thrain to the Dale, 48 ; Skarphedinn seizes him, but lets him go, 56 ; he is at Samstede with Lyting, 88 ; refuses to fall upon Hauskuld Njal's son, 89 ; he joins Flosi, 126 ; agrees to attack Njal, 158 ; seen by women on his way to Bergthorsknoll, 166 ; Flosi reproves him, 169, 172 ; he taunts Skarphedinn, 172 ; his saying on Skarphedinn's death song, 184 ; he is exiled, 283 ; Kari's suit against him, 238 ; his defiance of Kari, 293 ; he tells Bjorn that he fears not Kari, 304 ; he fights Kari, 308 ; lies badly wounded by Skaptarwater, 309.

Great rift or geo (Almannagjá), liii, cxxvi, cxxvii, cxxix, cxxx, cxxxi, cxxxii, cxxxviii, cxxxix. I. 238. II. 77, 156, 223, 232, 270, 275.

Greece, x, xl.

Greenland, discovered by Eric the red, cxvi, clxxiv, clxxvii.

Grettir the strong, a famous outlaw, iv, xxix ; his Saga quoted, xxx.

Grim, Lord of Sogn in Norway, I. 2, 80, 147. II. 60, 115.

Grim of Grimness challenged by Hallkell, and killed by him, lxxix. I. 147.

Grim Sverting's son, Speaker of the Law, lix ; his booth, cxxxvi.

Grim Asgrim's son, I. 80.

Grim Njal's son, xc, clxxii. I. 79 ; he woos and marries Astrid of Deepback, 80 ; stays at Bergthorsknoll, 80 ; at home, 136, 140 ; fares abroad, 235 ; fares abroad with Helgi, II. 6 ; sea fight with Gritgard and Snowcolf, 8, 9 ; helps Helgi to slay Gritgard, 11 ; he is made one of Earl Sigurd's body guard, 15, 320 ; Earl Hacon comes to the ships, 28 ; Grim sees Earl Hacon's ships, 39 ; he slays Aslak of Longisle, 35 ; escapes, 36, 37 ; he goes with Kari a sea-roving, 39 ; brings Kari to Iceland, 40 ; he goes with his brothers to Gritwater, 45 ; he is with Skarphedinn at Thrain's slaying, 53 ; slays Killing Hrapp, 55 ; fails to slay Lyting, 95 ; Njal taunts him, 98 ; he receives gifts from Mord Valgard's son, 103 ; seeks aid at the Thing, 132 ; he goes to Hola, hears of Flosi's plans, 166 ; returns to Bergthorsknoll, 167 ; defends the house, 171, 177 ; burned to death, 181, 182 ; his bones found, 194 ; mentioned, 280 ; atonement awarded, 283 ;

Flosi remembers in Orkney that Grim was one of Earl Sigurd's body guard, 320.
Grim hairy-cheek, son of Kettle haeing, II. 78, 139.
Grim the red, Flosi's kinsman, his name called in Flosi's dream, II. 198; suit against, 238; slain by Thorhall, 271.
Grim goatshoe, foster-brother of Ulfljót, liii; his reward, lix.
Grimsness, I. 248. II. 69, 70.
Gritgard, son of Moldan, summons Njal's sons to surrender, II. 8; he fights, 10; is slain, 11.
Gritgarth, I. 84; slain in Soknardale in Norway, II. 136.
Gritwatér (Grjótá), in Fleetlithé, lxxi, lxxvi, ci. Thrain's homestead, I. 101, 129, 219. II. 33, 43, 44, 57, 86, 111, 113.
Grose cited, II. 398.
Guardian spirits of the land, xix, lviii.
Gudbrand of the Dale, xxxiv, clxxiii; a friend of Earl Hacon, II. 18; his son Thrand, daughter Gudruna, 18; Hrapp comes to him, he is angry with Gudruna, 19, 20; tries to slay Hrapp, 21, 22; sends to Earl Haçon, 23; gives a feast, 24; his saying regarding the Gods, 25.
Guðbrandr Vigfússon, his essay on Icelandic Chronology. *See* Vigfússon
Gudfinna Thorolf's daughter, Njal's kinswoman, I. 123.
Guðlauga, the sister of Hamond, Bjorn the white's wife, II. 299.
Guðlaugr, cxxxix.
Gudleif, son of Ari, goes from Norway, with Thangbrand, to Iceland, II. 64; a manslayer, 64; seeks for Sorcerer Hedinn, 67; slays Hedinn; Thorwald's song on, 69; slays Thorwald, 70, 71; hews Otrygg's arm off, 75; sails back to Norway, 76.
Gudmund the powerful, his abode, iv; his feud with the men of Lightwater, cxxxiv; his booth, cxxxvi, cxxxviii, clxvii, clxxxvii, cxci; has to wife Thorlauga, dwells at Modruvale, II. 115; his pedigree, 115; his great wealth and numerous servants; a friend of Asgrim, 116; Asgrim claims his aid for Njal's sons, 137; his saying regarding Skarphedinn, 138; he is insulted by Thorkel foulmouth, 139, 141; he promises Asgrim aid, 144; a daysman of Njal, 150; he helps Njal with his fines, 151; refuses to take back the money, 156; his daughter Thordisa, the wife of Saurli of Waltheofstede, 203; he goes to the Thing, talks with Einar and Asgrim, 233,

234 ; he goes with Asgrim to the Courts, 241 ; at the Thing battle, 273, 277, 278 ; his son Halldor wounds Thorwalld, 274 ; his son-in-law Thorstein also in the battle, 276 ; offers peace, 282 ; goes to Asgrim's and others, receives gifts, bids Kari farewell, 284, 300, 304 ; his son Halldor slain in Brian's battle, 338.

Gudred Gunnhillda's son hangs Soti, and brings his goods to Gunnhillda, I. 17.

Gudred, a grandson of Harold fairhair, II. 388, 390.

Gudrida, daughter of Thorkel the black of Hleidrargarth, wife of Thorgeir of Lightwater, II. 78 ; mother of Thorkel foulmouth, 138.

Gudruna Gjuki's daughter, cix.

Gudruna Oswif's daughter, in Laxdæla, cxix. II. 116.

Gudruna Gudbrand's daughter, II. 18 ; beguiled by Killing Hrapp, 19, 20, 23.

Gudruna nightsun Egil's daughter, I. 186 ; Thorir's wife, 197 ; married to Thorgrim, Thorir's mate, 205.

Gula Thing's code, lii. II. 401.

Gula Thing, I. 6.

Gullbringssysla, ii.

Gunnar burnt by Thorwalld cropbeard, liii.

Gunnar son of Baug, lxxii ; avenges Stein's death, lxxiii ; is slain, lxxiii, lxxiv, lxxv. I. 59.

Gunnar of Lithend, son of Hamond, his mother Rannveig or Rannveiga, xix, xxxiii, lxix, lxx, lxxv, lxxvi, lxxxi, lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvi, lxxxviii, lxxxix, xc, xciii, xcix, ci, ciii, cvii, cx, cxi, cxii, cxiii, cxv, cxix, cxx, cxxii, cxxiv, cxxxiii, cxli, cxlii, clv, clxvi, clxxii, clxxxvi, kinsman of Unna, Mord's daughter, I. 59 ; dwells at Lithend in Fleetlithe, 60 ; brothers and sister, 60, 61 ; Unna comes to him, 62 ; undertakes her suit, 63, 64 ; goes to Njal, 64 ; goes to Hrutstede in disguise, 70 ; summons Hrut in Hrutstede, 71 ; escape, 72 ; at the Althing, 74 ; challenges Hrut, 75 ; recovers Unna's dower, 76 ; thinks ill of Unna's marriage, 78 ; at Helgi's wedding, 82 ; Hallvard comes to Lithend, 82, 83 ; fares abroad with Hallvard, 84 ; will not go to Earl Hacon, 84 ; goes a sea-roving—meets Vandil and Karli's ships, 86 ; fight with sea rovers at Reval, 89 ; at Osel, 89, 90 ; slays Hallgrim and Kolskegg ; seizes the magic bill, 91, 92 ; comes to Denmark, 93 ; winters with Earl Hacon, 94 ; love for Bergliota,

returns to Iceland, 95; sees Njal, 95, 96; rides to the Thing, Hallgerda greets him, 97; Gunnar's attire, 98; asks Hallgerda in marriage, 99; tells Njal of his betrothal, 100; his wedding at Lithend, 100-105; Hallgerda and Gunnar visit at Bergthorsknoll, 105; Gunnar returns home in wrath, 106; rides to the Thing, 107; atonement for Swart's slaying, 110; blames Hallgerda, 111; rides to the Thing, 113; makes award for Kol's slaying, 117; rides to the Thing, 118; atonement for Atli's slaying, 121; answer to Skarphedinn, 121; award for Brynjolf's slaying, 125; cautions Sigmund, 126, 127; warns Njal of Thord's danger, 127; rides to the Thing, 129; hears of Thord's slaying, 132; offers self-doom, 133; rebukes Sigmund, 134; wrath at Hallgerda and Sigmund, hears of Sigmund's slaying, 145; comes to Njal, makes award for Sigmund, 146; liberality during the scarcity, 149; runs short of provisions, 149; goes to Kirkby, 149; Otkell's churlish treatment, 149; buys Malcolm, 150; rides to the Thing, 151; finds stolen food in his house, 153; slaps Hallgerda on the face, 153; his household suspected, 155; offers Otkell atonement, 157; summoned for theft, 163; rides to the Thing, 164; makes award in Otkell's suit, 167; returns to Lithend, 168; Otkell rides over him, 170; tells Kolskegg of the wound, 171; threatens Skamkell, 171; fight at Rangriver, 172-177; slays Hallbjorn, Skamkell, Audulf, and Otkell, 175, 176; asks counsel of Njal, 177; at home, 179; suits of manslaughter against, 181-183; agrees to an award, 183; pays the blood money, 184; at home, 184; his horse, 186; welcomes Starkad and Egil's sons, 187; agrees to the horse fight, 188; his sons, 190; drives his own horse, 190; attire, 190; the fight, 190-192; punishes Thorgeir and Kol, 191; aids Asgrim at the Thing, 193; warned by Njal, visits Asgrim, 194; refuses to draw Njal's sons into his quarrels, 195; rides to Tongue, 195; returns to Lithend, 195; rides over Thurso Water, 198; dream, 198; song, 198, 199; advises Hjort to turn back, 199; attacked at Knafahills, 201, 202; slays Sigurd Swinehead and Ulfhedinn, 201; song,

202; slays Bork, 203; slays Thorir, 204; wounds Ottar, Thorgeir, and Starkad, 204; rides to Njal for counsel, 206; outlaws the dead men at Knafahills, 207; rides to Njal, 209; rides to the Thing, 210; gratitude, 211; agrees to Hjallti's award, 212; pays his fines and rides home, 213; Njal spaes his fortune, 96, 178, 215; at Thingskala-Thing, 216; saying as to his fate, 217; at Lithend, 218; Gunnar warned by Njal, rides to Lithend, 220; suits against the Thorgeirs, 222; visits Olaf, and receives an Irish hound and other gifts from him, 223; rides to Lithend, 224; from the isles, 225; discovers an ambush, 226; slays Aunund the fair, 227; slays Thorgeir Otkell's son, 228; song, 228, 229; talks with Njal, 230; at the Thing, 232; pays his fines, 234; banished, 233; takes passage with Arnfin of the Bay, 235; his sons, 235; bids farewell, 236; rides to Markfleet, 236; saying as he looks on the Lithe, 237; turns back and remains at Lithend, 237; outlawed, 238; Njal offers assistance 239; his hound slain, 241; attacked in Lithend, 242; slays Thorgrim, valiant defence, 243; shoots Eylif, slays Thorbrand and Thorgrim, 245; Hallgerda's taunts, 245; his song, 246; slain, 246; his cairn and last song, 249, 251; deeds and memory spoken of, II. 1, 3, 5, 6, 49, 51, 102, 169, 182, 230, 299; his sons. *See* Hogni and Grani.

Gunnar's-holt, I. 59, 60.

Gunnar Lambi's son fares abroad with Thrain, II. 3; he rides with Thrain, 44, 48; peace is granted him by Njal's sons, 56; bears Thrain's body to Gritwater, 57; at a feast in Samstede, 88; refuses to break the peace, 89; Mord tells lies of him, 107; joins Hauskuld's avengers, 126; asks for the death of Njal's sons, 157; he is in Flosi's plot, 158; joins Flosi's band at Threecorner, 166; reproved by Flosi, 172; taunts Skarphedinn, 180; his eye put out, 181; his name called in Flosi's dream, 199; suit against him, 238; exiled, 283; defiance of Kari, 293; he is sent by Flosi to Hornfirth, 302; threatened by Kari, 316; he mockingly tells the story of the burning to Earl Sigurd, 325; he is slain by Kari, 326.

Gunnar of Skal slain by Kari, II. 310.

Gunnhillda, the wife of King Eric Bloodaxe, and mother of Harold Grayfell, xxxiii, lxxxiii, clxxii. I. 7; invites Hrut and Auzur, 8; her welcome, 9, 10; entertainment, 11, 12; gifts to Hrut, 13; sends Gudred to take Soti, 17; her affection for Hrut, 18; parting gifts, 19; death mentioned, 84; her history and fate, II. 377-396.

"Gunnhillda's moss," II. 395.

Gunnlaugr snaketongue's songs, cxxi.

Gutring (Guðormr?), the Danish sea king, cxc.

Hacon, Earl, the bad, or the mighty, xxxiii, xxxix, lii, clxxii, clxxiii; rules in Norway, son of Sigurd, I. 84; makes Gunnar welcome, 94; gives Gunnar a gold ring, 95, 98. II. 1; welcomes Thrain, 2; his son Eric, 3; sends Thrain to slay Kol, 3-5; his gifts to Thrain, 5, 6; Kari brings him scatts from Orkney, 15; he is a friend of Gudbrand, 18; comes to the Dale—makes Hrapp an outlaw, 23; at a feast at Gudbrand's, 24; his saying on the might of the Gods, 25; pursues Hrapp, 26; follows him to Grim and Helgi's ships, 29-31; his spaedom, 26, 29, 30, 31; his saying on Thrain and Hrapp's escape, 33; his wrath at Helgi and Grim, 34, 35; his son Sweyn—he takes Helgi and Grim captive—orders them to be slain, 36; they escape while he sleeps, 36, 37; he demands them from Kari—an atonement made by Eric his son, 38; his death, 63; his crafty counsel, 390, 391; his revenge on Gunnhillda, 392-395; coinage, 399-400. *See* Eric and Sweyn.

Hacon, son of Harold fairhair, foster-child of King Athelstane, I. 14.; reigns in Norway, II. 382; death, 387, 399.

Hacon, Earl, son of Gritgarth, I. 84.

Hacon, Earl Harold's son, II. 370.

Hæing, hæng, or trout, xlii.

Hæing. *See* Kettle.

Hænsa Þórir (Chicken Thorir), cxii.

Haflidi's son, II. 277. *See* Bruni.

Hafr the wise at Gunnar's wedding, I. 102; he is summoned by Runolf, II. 120; appealed to by Njal, 148; one of Flosi's daysmen, 149.

Hafr the wealthy, the son of Thorkel, refuses to aid Njal's sons, II. 136.

Hagi, Gest Oddleif's son's dwelling, xci. II. 73.

Haldor, son of Snorri the priest, II. 408.
Haldor's son, II. 34. *See* Oddi.
Haleyg, king of Helgeland, grandfather of Grim, lord of Sogn, II. 115.
Half, the son of Hjorleif, the lover of women, II. 61.
Halfdan the clever, I. 78.
Halkell the brother of Kettle-björn the old, xliv; comes to Iceland, kills Grim, and takes his land, lxxix.
Hall (skáli, stufa or stofa, and eldhús), xcix, c.
Hall of the Side, v, xx, xc, xci, cxxix, cxxxvi, clxvi, clxxiv, clxxxvii, clxxxviii, cxci, cxciii, cxcv; he dwells at Thvattwater in Alftafirth, his pedigree and family, II. 62; daughter marries Flosi, 61; he makes Thangbrand and Gudleif welcome; is baptized, 65; sets out with Thangbrand on a missionary tour, 64; he repairs Thangbrand's ship, 65; chosen by the Christians as their speaker at the Thing, consults Thorgeir, 78; is sent for by Flosi, 118; comes to the Thing, joins Flosi, begs him to take atonement from Njal's sons, 131; warns Flosi of Mord, 132; he is with him in court at the pleading, 146; Njal appears to him, 147; he is one of Flosi's daysmen, 149; he agrees to Gudmund's wish, 151; alters the award, 152; sends for Njal's sons and Flosi, 153; his regret, 155; stands by Flosi, 157; is not engaged in his plot against Njal, 160; his son Ljot summoned in Flosi's dream, 198; he promises Flosi aid, 200, 201; his counsel, 201, 206; his saying on Flosi's insult to Asgrim, 217; tries to part the fighters at the Thing battle, 274; his son Ljot slain, 278; he prays for atonement on even terms, but asks no blood money for Ljot, 280, 281; a voluntary atonement offered for Ljot, 285; he comes to Flosi at Swinefell, 291; counsels him to make peace with Thorgeir, 292; he goes to Holt, his riding dress, 293, 294; Thorgeir makes him welcome, he makes atonement for Flosi, 294-297; his son Thorstein makes peace for Flosi with Earl Sigurd, 321, 324. *See* Thorstein, Ljot, Egil, Thorwald, and Kol.
Hall of Hawkdale baptized by Thangbrand, II. 69.
Hall the strong, son of Aunund of Witchwood, at the slaying of Holt-Thorir, I. 185.
Halla, daughter of Lyting, and

mother of Bjarni Broddhelgi's son, II. 204.
Hallbera, daughter of Hroald, wife of Starkad, I. 185.
Hallbera, Gudmund's mother, II. 115.
Hallbjorn the white, brother of Otkell and Hallkell, I. 148; stays with Otkell, 148; opinion of Malcolm, 149; stands by Otkell, 157; on Otkell's refusal, 159; wroth with him, 160, 161; says Skamkell has lied, 162; slain by Gunnar, 175.
Hallbjorn's beacon, I. 5.
Hallbjorn the strong, cxxxi; dwells at Broaddale, Flosi comes to him, II. 201; he takes Flosi's money, and promises him aid, 202; he comes to the Thing, and forces Eyjolf to sit still, 225; tries to slay Kari, 271; is wounded, and flees, 272; he thrusts Solvi, head downwards, in a kettle of boiling broth, 277.
Hallbjorn halftroll of Ravensfood, father of Kettle hæing, II. 78, 139.
Halldor the son of Gudmund the powerful, cxci; wounds Thorwalld Tjorfi's son at the battle at the Thing, II. 274; he is slain in Brian's battle, 338.
Halldor Ornolf's son, I. 180.
Hallgerda, daughter of Hauskuld, lxxxiii, lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvi, lxxxvii, lxxxix, cv, cxx, cxli, cxlv, clxxxv, clxxxvi, clxxxvii. I. 2; named Longcoat, her beauty, prodigality, and hard-heartedness; her foster-father Thiostolf, 30; wooed by Thorwald, 31; given away by her father, 31; her displeasure, 32; a merry bride at her wedding, 34; goes home with Thorwald—is prodigal and grasping, 35; taunts Thorwald, 36; receives a blow on the face, 36; her revenge, 37; helps Thiostolf, 38; goes back to Hauskuldstede, 39; goods increase, 43; sought in marriage by Glum, 45; her dress, 47, 48; reply to Glum, 48, 49; her goods, 49; second wedding, 50; goes to Varmalek, 50; declines housekeeping, 50; gives birth to a girl Thorgerda, 50; loses her mother's brother Swan, 51; begs that Thiostolf may stay at Varmalek, 53; takes Thiostolf's part, is struck by Glum, 54; told by Thiostolf of Glum's death—tells him to go to Hrutstede, 56; dwells in Laugarness, 59; greets Gunnar at the Thing, 97; he asks her in marriage, 98; betroths herself, 100; her third wedding, 102, 103; takes to housekeeping at Lithend, 105; refuses to give

place to Thorhalla, quarrels with Bergthora, insults Njal, 106; tells Kol to slay Swart, 108; sends a man to the Thing to tell of Swart's slaying, 109; sends to the Thing tidings of Kol's death, 116; angry at Gunnar for making peace with Njal, 117; sends for Brynjolf her kinsman, 118; tells him to slay Atli, 119; sends to Bergthora to tell of Atli's slaying, 120; and to the Thing to tell Gunnar, 120; on Atli's death, 121, hears of Brynjolf's slaying, 124; fondness for Sigmund, 127; asks Thrain to slay Thord, 128; reminds Sigmund and Skiolld of their promise to slay Thord, 129; and of Thord's being at Thorolfsfell, 130; glad of Thord's slaying, 132; sends word to Bergthora and to the Thing, 132; her bower at Lithend, 136; Thorgerda, Thrain, and Sigmund revile and mock Njal and his family, 136-138; she hears of the slaying of Sigmund and Skiolld, 144; talks with Malcolm the thrall, 151; sends him to steal from Kirkby, 151, 152; punished by Gunnar, 153; gives the stolen cheese to the women, 156; on the fight at Rangriver, 174; well-pleased at the man-slaying by Rangriver, 229; well-pleased to see Gunnar at home, 237; her sleeping-room, 242; her revenge, refuses to give Gunnar two locks of her hair, 245; flees to Gritwater, 249; she is too friendly to Killing-Hrapp, II. 34; refuses to make the sons of Njal welcome at Gritwater, 45; heaps insults on them, 47; she is to go with Thrain to the Dale, 48.

Hallgrim, brother of Kolskegg, I. 89; his magic bill, 89; slain by Gunnar, 91.

Hallgrim Lyting's brother an unruly man, II. 88; is slain by Skarphedinn, 94.

Halli the red slain by Thorgrim, II. 148.

Hallkatla, sister of Joreida, wife of Hall of the Side, II. 62.

Hallkell, brother of Kettlebjörn the old, I. 147.

Hallkell Otkell's brother lives at Kirkby, I. 148; stands by Otkell, 157; slain by Kolskegg, 176.

Hallstein, son of Thorolf Mostrarskeg, xliv.

Hallstein Lyting's brother an unruly man, II. 88; at Hauskuld Njal's son's slaying, 89; slain by Skarphedinn, 95.

Hallvard the white, a man from "the Bay," I. 82; stays at Lithend, 82; fares abroad

with Gunnar, 84, 85, 86; goes a sea-roving, 87, 88; at Earl Hacon's, 94; returns with Gunnar to Iceland, 95, 97.
Hallvard Soti, a sea rover, slain by Kol, II. 2.
Hamingjur, or Fylgjur, xix.
Hamond Gunnar's son's suit against Onund's sons, lxxiv; he is betrothed to Rannveiga Mord's daughter, lxxv. I. 59. Father of Gunnar of Lithend, II. 299. *See* Vebrand, Gunnar and Hroar.
Hamond the halt, Arnguda's son, dwells at Hamondstede, I. 61. II. 292.
Hamond Hellskin, the son of Hjor, II. 61.
Hamrämmir, or Shape-strong men, xxi.
Haraldskjær, II. 396.
Hardanger firth, II. 389.
Hareck, II. 333, 342.
Harold, Earl, his leap in the Orkney Saga, II. 56; his son Hacon, 370, 372.
Harold Fairhair, his government of Norway, ix, xxxv, xxxvi; sails for the Western Isles, xi, xii; puts Lord Ar to death, lxxvi. I. 7, 84. II. 352.
Harold, called Gold-Harold, slays Harold Grayfell, II. 392, 393; is slain by Earl Hacon the bad, 394.
Harold Grayfell, son of Eric Bloodaxe, clxxii. I. 7; gifts to Hrut, 13; body-guard, 15; parting with Hrut, 18-20; death noticed, 84. II. 381; fostered by Harold Gorm's son, 387; succeeds Hacon, 388; origin of his name, 388, 389; slain, 392.
Harold Gorm's son, King of Denmark, slain by Palnatoki, xxxiii; name mentioned, clxxii; welcomes Gunnar, I. 93; gifts to Gunnar, 94, 98; his son Sweyn, II. 354; shelters Gunnhillda and Hacon, II. 387, 391-395.
Harold Hilditann, son of Hræreck Ringscatterer, I. 78.
Harold (King) the stern (Harðráða), and the story of Audun and his White Bear, from King Harold's Saga, clxxiii-clxxxiii; falls at Stamford Bridge (1066), clxxiv; his coinage, II. 408.
Hastings, battle of, clxxxi.
Hauk, Egil's son, I. 185; slain, 204.
Hauskuld son of Dala-Kolli, or Dalakol, Hrut's half-brother, lxxx; his quarrel with Gunnar, lxxxv; death mentioned, lxxx, lxxxviii; his booth, cxxxvi. I. 1; gives a feast, 2; rides to the Thing, 3; advises Hrut to marry Unna, 3, 4; rides home from the Thing, 5; advises Hrut to claim his inheritance, 6; welcomes

Hrut, 20; at his wedding, 20; rides to the Thing, 21 ; pays Hallgerda's portion, 34; with Hrut at the Althing, 27 ; wrath at Lund 29 ; daughter Hallgerda, 30 ; takes back Hallgerda, 30 ; on Thorwald's slaying, 40; atonement to Oswif, 41; welcomes Olof's sons ; sends for Hrut, 45 ; agrees to Glum's marriage, 48 ; gives the wedding feast, 49 ; drives away Thiostolf, 52 ; welcomes Thorarin, 58 ; his dream, 72 ; goes to Hrut, 72, 73 ; goes with Hrut to the Althing, 74 ; returns home, 77 ; his daughter Hallgerda, 98 ; bids Gunnar welcome, 99 ; his sons at Gunnar's wedding feast, 102, 103; at Otkell's suit, 167 ; dies, 189. See Olof, Thorleik.

Hauskuld's, Njal's son, death, cxxi. I. 79 ; at Gunnar's wedding, 102 ; at home, 136 ; counsels with Bergthora, 140 ; forbidden to assist at Sigmund and Skiolld's slaying, 142 ; he goes with his brethren to Gritwater, II. 45 ; has a farm at Holt, rides past Samstede, 89 ; he is slain by Lyting and his brothers, 90 ; his mother brings the body to Bergthorsknoll, 91 ; the vengeance of Njal's sons, 95-98 ; avenged by his son Amund the blind, 98, 99 ; slaying spoken of, 160, 161. *See* Amund.

Hauskuld the Whiteness priest, son of Thrain, lxxxviii, xcii, xciii, xcv, cx, cxiii, clvi, clix, clxxxvii, clxxxviii. I. 189 ; is taken by Kettle as his foster-child, II. 58 ; he is transferred to Njal, 59 ; he comes to Bergthorsknoll, is much beloved, 60 ; he woos Hildigunna, 80, 81 ; made priest of Whiteness, 86 ; marries Hildigunna and dwells at Ossaby, 87 ; he is at Samstede, will not attack Hauskuld, Njal's son, leaves the place in anger, 89 ; alluded to in a song, 93 ; brings about an atonement for Lyting's slaying, 100 ; his Thing, 101 ; gives a feast at Ossaby, 104 ; he refuses to believe Mord's slanders, 105, 106 ; he fares to Swinefell, is warned by Flosi, refuses to leave Ossaby, 107 ; Flosi gives him a scarlet cloak, comes home, 108 ; he is slain by Njal's sons and Mord, 110 ; award of his atonement, 151 ; his slaying mentioned, 112, 113, 114, 117, 119, 123, 126, 138, 145, 147, 148, 151, 155, 183, 348. *See* Hildigunna.

Hauskuld the white, the son of

Ingialld the strong, Rodny and Ingialld's father, I. 79. II. 124.
Hauskuld's daughter. *See* Rodny ; *see* Hallgerda.
Hauskuldstede, I. 1, 66.
Havard, Earl Sigurd's brother-in-law, II. 13 ; marries Ragnhilda, 383.
Havarðar Saga, clxx, clxxi.
Hawkdale in Dýrafirth, iii, cvii. I. 72, 73. II. 68, 70.
Haydale, II. 201.
Haymaking, cxi.
Hayneed, cxii.
Head, II. 116. *See* Thord.
Headbrink, the dwelling of Thorgrím the showy, v. II. 67, 118, 285, 288.
Heathen party, xci.
Hebrides, xi. *See* South Islands.
Hedemann's booth, cxxxvi.
Hedinn the big, huckster, I. 65, 66, 70-73.
Hedinn the sorcerer, II. 67.
Hedinn, II. 135. *See* Skarphedinn.
Heidarby in Denmark, I. 93.
Heiðarvíga Saga, cxiv, clxviii.
Heinabergs Sand, II. 66.
Heing's son Rafn, I. 44.
Heing's son Storolf, I. 60.
Hekla, ii, lxviii.
Helga, daughter of Thord Longbeard, Skeggi's son, Teit's mother, I. 80, 146.
Helga Njal's daughter at Gunnar's wedding, I. 102; marries Kari, II. 40 ; leaves the burning house, 175 ; left by Kari in Thorgeir's care, 298 ; death mentioned, 348 ; her children, 348.
Helga, daughter of Helgi the lean, the mother of Einar, II. 115.
Helgafell, Snorri the priest's dwelling, iii. II. 116.
Helgeland (Halogaland), in Norway, lxxii, lxxviii. II. 1, 115, 378, 379.
Helgi Njal's son has the *gift* of foresight, xxiv ; his wife, doubts as to her identity, lxxxvi ; his travels, xc, clxxii, clxxiii ; his character, I. 79 ; woos Thorhalla, Asgrim's daughter, 81 ; at Gunnar's wedding, 102 ; his wife comes home to Bergthorsknoll, 105 ; at home, 136, 140 ; in Asgrim's suit, 193 ; he goes abroad, 235 ; sails with Grim abroad—a sea-fight with the Vikings, II. 8-11 ; he slays Gritgard, 11 ; his spaedom or second sight, 12, 13 ; in the battle with the Earls, 15 ; he refuses to shelter Hrapp, 27 ; will not betray him, 28 ; resists Earl Hacon, 34, 35 ; slays Egil, is made captive, 36 ; escapes, 37 ; refuses to take atonement from the Earl, but makes peace with Eric, 38 ; returns home, 40 ; with his brothers at

Gritwater, 45 ; asks Thrain for atonement, 46 ; his attire, 51 ; at Thrain's slaying, 54 ; hews off Hrapp's arm, 55 ; thinks that Grani and Gunnar should be slain, 56 ; he undertakes Lyting, 94 ; lets him escape, 95 ; at the Thing, 132 ; goes to Hola, but comes to Skarphedinn's aid, 167 ; urges him to do as their father wills, 170 ; aids in the defence of Bergthorsknoll, 171 ; Thorhalla's parting, 174 ; he is slain by Flosi, 175 ; name mentioned in suits for manslaughter, etc., 196, 198, 208, 210, 211, 212, 235, 236, 243, 244, 245, 246, 280, 283, 320, 321.

Helgi Droplaug's son, II. 62.

Helgi, father of Thorir, II. 139.

Helgi, father of Ingialld, father of Oleif the white, I. 1. II. 117.

Helgi, the son of Bjorn the roughfooted, II. 60.

Helgi the lean, first settler in Eyafirth, II. 61, 115.

Hell, xvi, cxxii, cxxiii.

Hellblade Thorolf, xxxix.

Hellshoes, cxxii, cxxiii.

Helsingborg, II. 4.

Hèraðsflói, vi.

Heraldry, early traces of, II. 51.

Herdisa, Thord of the Head's daughter, II. 115, 116.

Heriolf or Herjolf, father of Hrut, marries Thorgerda, lxxx. I. 2.

Herjolf the white, father of Solvora, II. 61.

Hern, I. 7.

Hervora, mother of Grim, lord of Sogn in Norway, II. 115.

Hestbeck, in Grimsness, I. 248. II. 70.

Highbankawk, II. 68. *See* Thorstein.

High Court of Justice, lv.

Hildiglum, son of Runolf, dwells in Reykium in Skeid, II. 163.

Hildigunna Starkad Flosi's brother's daughter, xcii, xciii, xcvii, c, cv ; a high-spirited maiden, II. 61 ; wooed by Hauskuld Thrain's son, 80 ; she will not marry him unless he obtains a priesthood, 81, 82 ; marries Hauskuld, 87 ; dwells at Ossaby, 87 ; goes with Hauskuld to Swinefell, 107 ; finds his dead body, 112 ; keeps the cloak in which he was slain, 113 ; she welcomes Flosi, 121 ; urges him to avenge Hauskuld's slaying, 122 ; throws the bloody cloak over Flosi, 123 ; marries Kari ; their children, 348.

Hildigunna Starkad Bork's son's daughter, named the Leech, I. 185 ; stands up for Gunnar and his horse, 186, 188, 189 ; saying to

Thorgeir, 196 ; dresses Starkad's wound, 205.
Hildigunna Thorstein Titling's daughter, I. 185.
Hilldir the Old of Borgarhaven, baptized by Thangbrand, II. 66 ; summoned by Flosi, 118 ; his son. *See* Glum.
Hill of Laws, or Thingbrekka, at the Spring Things, lxv.
Hill of Laws, or Lögberg, lxxxviii, cxxviii, cxxix, cxxxvi, cxlv, cxlvi, clxi. II. 71, 78, 145, 152, 228, 235, 236, 237, 238, 244, 245, 261, 262, 263, 279.
Hisingen, island of, I. 82, 94.
Hjallti Skeggi's son, of Thursodale, xl ; his booth, cxxxvi, cxlvii, clxvii ; is outlawed for blasphemy ; goes to Norway with Gizur, xci. Speech at the Thing, appeal to Gunnar, I. 212 ; proposal agreed to, 213 ; in the award in Thorgeir's suit, 213 ; refuses to attack Gunnar, 238 ; summoned, 238 ; blasphemes the gods at the Thing, sails abroad with Gizur, outlawed for blasphemy, intercedes for the Icelanders with King Olaf, II. 76 ; returns to Iceland, 77 ; meets Njal and his sons and promises aid, 129, 130 ; advises with Njal's friends, 144, 145, 146 ; Njal appeals to him, 148 ; one of Njal's daysmen, 150 ; takes charge of half the blood-money, 156 ; he tells Runolf, Thorstein's son, he must have seen the "Wolf's ride," 164 ; Kari comes to him, 188, 189 ; he asks Kari to stay with him, 191 ; seeks Njal's bones, 192, 193 ; carries his body to church, 195 ; promises Kari help, 196 ; goes to the Thing with Thorgeir Craggeir, 218 ; at the Thing, suits on Njal's burning, 227, 228, 241 ; makes an onslaught on Flosi, 272 ; offers peace, 282 ; asks Gudmund home with him, 284.
Hjarðarholt, cvi. I. 72, 223.
Hjort Gunnar's brother, lxxxviii. I. 61 ; at Lithend, 187 ; rides with Gunnar to Tongue, 195 ; wishes to wake Gunnar, 198 ; Gunnar's dream, 199 ; refuses to return, 200 ; slain by Thorir, 204 ; brought to Lithend on his shield, 204 ; suits in his manslaughter, 209, 211, 212, 213.
Hjor the son of Half, II. 61.
Hjorleif, the lover of women, the father of Oblaud, II. 61, 64.
Hlada, Lada, or Hladir, the old capital of Drontheim, Earl Hacon's court at, clxxii ; its shrine, II. 18 ; Njal's sons and Thrain at, 26 ; Kari comes with the Orkney scatts to, 37.

Hladbooth Hlaðbuð (Brinkbooth), cxxxi, cxxxviii. II. 223, 270.
Hleidrargarth, II. 78. *See* Thorkell.
Hlenni the old of Saurby, II. 78 ; his son, 277. *See* Thorstein.
Hliðarendi. *See* Lithend.
Hlodver, the son of Thorfinn the scull-splitter, father of Earl Sigurd, II. 11 ; his son, 320, 333. *See* Sigurd.
Hof, or temple of the gods, xxxvii, xlvi, lxxi, lxxviii, lxxxi.
Hof, Skamkell's dwelling, I. 148.
Hof, the temple of Mord, Valgard's son, xciv ; his dwelling, I. 148, 154, 207, 253. II. 100, 102, 190, 204, 218.
Höfðabrekka, v.
Höfði, v.
Hofsvogr (Templevoe), xxxvi.
Hogni Gunnar's son a brave man, but distrustful, I. 190; kind and good, 235 ; at Lithend, 237 ; visits his father's cairn, 250, 251 ; slays Hroald and Thorgeir, 253 ; makes the award for Gunnar's slaying, 255 ; marries Alfeida, 255. Stands Grani in good stead, II. 56 ; he sides with Kettle in the atonement for Thrain, 58 ; Mord's lies regarding him, 106.
Hogni the white takes Thrain in his ship, I. 235.
Hogni the white, the son of Otryg, II. 64.
Hol in Hawkdale, cvii.
Holar, II. 166.
Holmboe, M.C.A., cited, II. 403.
Holmgang, duel, cxxxii.
Holmstein, the son of Auzur of Broaddale, II. 64.
Holmstein, son of Bersi the wise, dwells at Bersastede, II. 202 ; promises aid to Flosi, 203 ; entertains Flosi, 205 ; attacks Kari, 272 ; driven back by Thorgeir, 274.
Holt, Hauskuld Njal's son's farm, II. 88.
Holt, under Eyjafell, Thorgeir's homestead, lxxvi. I. 103. II. 189, 208, 287, 290, 294, 307, 316.
Holt-Thorir, son of Thorgeir and Asgerda, lxxvii. I. 61, 103, 185. II. 62 ; his sons, 129, 299. *See* Thorir.
Holtbeacon Heath, I. 26, 73.
Holtford, II. 124, 125, 188, 189.
Homicidal cases, trial of, cxlv.
Hordaland, II. 64.
Horn, the North Cape, iv.
Hornfirth, v, cxviii. I. 126, 129. II. 66, 200, 301, 302, 319, 322, 346.
Horses sacrificed, xxvi, xl.
Hostfinn, II. 342.
House building, xxxvii, ci.
Hræreck Ringscatterer, I. 78.

Hrafn the red. *See* Rafn, II. 333, 335, 336, 337, 343.
Hrafn, Speaker of the Law. *See* Rafn.
Hrafnhilda, a grand-daughter of Kettle hæing, wife of Gunnar, Stein's brother, lxxiii.
Hrafnhilda Hamond's mother, I. 60.
Hrafnkell the priest, cliv, clxiii, clxvii.
Hrafnkell Freysgoða Saga quoted, xviii, xli, cxxx, clxvi.
Hrafnkell, the son of Thorir, II. 202.
Hrafnkell Raum, II. 202.
Hrafnkelstede in Jokulsdale-water, in the east, clxiv.
Hrapp, son of Bjorn the rough-footed, I. 80, 147.
Hrapp, or Killing-Hrapp, son of Aurgunleid, the son of Geirolf the fighter, xxxiv, clxxii, clxxiii. II. 16; slays Aurlyg, 17; comes to Kolbein, 16; he is landed at Agdirness; comes to the Dale, 18; beguiles Gudruna, 19; slays Asvard, 20; tells Gudbrand, 21; comes to Tofi, 22; meets Gudruna, 23; plunders and burns Gudbrand's shrine, 24; he is pursued by Earl Hacon, 25; flees to Hlada, 26; Thrain shelters him, 27-32; he is brought to Iceland, 33; lives at Grit-water, 41; rides with Thrain, 44; insults Njal's sons, 45-47; goes with Thrain to the Dale, 48; he is slain by Grim and Helgi, 55.
Hrappstede, a homestede of Thrain's, afterwards of Hrapp's, II. 33, 41.
Hrepps, II. 284. *See* Rapes.
Hroald the red, I. 185.
Hroald Geir's son, I. 248; slain, 253.
Hroald, son of Hrodlaug the sad, II. 116.
Hroald, son of Eric Frizzle-beard, II. 136, 205.
Hroald, Auzur's son, sides with Flosi, II. 157; slain by Skarp-hedinn, 171.
Hroar, son of Uni, priest at Tongue, marries Arnguda, I. 61.
Hroar from Hromundstede, II. 158.
Hroar, Hamond's son, II. 238.
Hrodlaug, son of Earl Rognvald, II. 62.
Hrodlaug the sad, son of Bjorn ironside, II. 116.
Hroi, Arnstein's son, II. 221.
Hrollaugr, xxxvi.
Hromundstede, II. 158.
Hrosbjorn, the father of Asbjorn baldpate of Myrka, II. 136.
Hrossey (Pomona), clxxiii. II. 12, 15, 320, 325.
Hrunamannahrepp, clxxiii.
Hrut son of Herjolf and Thorgerda, lxxx, lxxxii, lxxxiii, lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvii,

lxxxviii, cxviii, cxxiv, cxxxiii, cxlv, clv, clxxii, clxxvii, clxxxvii. Half-brother to Hauskuld, I. 1; at Hauskuld's, 2; his spaedom about Hallgerda, 2; woos Unna, 3; rides home, 5; joins Auzur, 6; rides to Rangriver, 6; sails to Norway, 7, 8; in Harold's body-guard, 10; cruise, 13; fights with and slays Atli, 14-16; returns to Norway with great store of goods, hears of Soti's death, gifts to Gunnhillda, 17; farewell to Gunnhillda, 18, 19; sails for Iceland, 20; wedding, 20, 21; wedded life, 22-26; Unna separates from him, 26, 27; her dower claimed, 27; challenges Mord, 27, 28; at Lund, 29; returns home, 30; advice to Hauskuld, 34; thinks ill of Hallgerda's match, 33; at the wedding, 34; on Thorwald's slaying, 39; makes the award to Oswif, 41-43; on Hallgerda's marriage with Glum, 46; advice to Glum, 47; at Hallgerda's betrothal, 48; her second wedding, 49; Thiostolf comes to him at night, 56; tells him of Glum's slaying, 57; slays Thiostolf, 58; Unna's dower, 63, 66, 67, 68; welcomes Gunnar as Hedinn, 70; tells him how the suit is to be taken up, 71; discovers the trick, 73; opposes Gunnar at the Althing, pays back Unna's dower, 74; returns home, 77; answer to Gunnar about Hallgerda, 99; at Gunnar's wedding feast, 102, 103; agrees to the match between Thorgerda and Thrain, 104; advice to Gunnar in Otkell's suit, 165, 167; his relations with Gunnhillda, II. 389, 390.

Hrutfirth, I. 26, 66.

Hrutstede, I. 4, 66.

Human sacrifices, xxxviii, xxxix.

Humboldt quoted, cxvi.

Hunafirth, vi, cxxxix.

Húnaflói, iv.

Hundi Earl, II. 13; slays Havard in Thraswick, 13; flees before Earl Sigurd, 14.

Hvamdwellers, II. 116.

Hvamm, lxxx.

Hvammsfirth, iii, lxxx, cxxxi. II. 116.

Hvítá, vi.

Hy Maine, cxciii.

Hy Niall, a dynasty of Irish kings, cxcii.

Idol worship, xxvi.

Illugi, the brother of Grettir the outlaw, xxix.

Illugi's son, II. 158. *See* Thord.

Images, xl.

Infanticide, xxv.

Ingialld, son of Helgi, I. 1. II. 117.

Ingialld, son of Thorstein High-

bankawk ; becomes a Christian, II. 68.
Ingialld, son of Hauskuld the white ; dwells at the Springs, clxxxvii ; I. 79 ; at Gunnar's wedding, 102 ; marries Thraslauga, daughter of Egil, II. 124 ; summoned by Flosi ; he is in a strait, 125 ; sides with Flosi, 158 ; his sister Rodny comes to him, 160 ; he withdraws from Flosi's band, 161 ; he is not at the burning ; blamed by the sons of Sigfus, 165, 184 ; wounded by Flosi, 185 ; slays Thorstein, 186, 187 ; joins Kari, 188, 189 ; his wound makes him lame for life, 195.
Ingolf, first settler, ix, xii, xxxvi, xlii, xliv, liv.
Ingolf's Hörði, or Ingolf's Head, v, xcvii. II. 347.
Ingunna Flosi's mother, daughter of Thorir of Espihole, II. 60.
Ingunna, daughter of Helgi the lean, II. 61.
Innisfail, annals of, cxciii.
Inquests (kviðr), cxliii, cxliv, clxxi.
Invulnerable men, xxiii.
Iona, viii.
Ireland, i, x, clxxxiv, cxcii, cxciii. II. 7, 323, 327, 328, 332, 342.
Irish annalists quoted, clxxxix, cxcii, cxciii.
Irishman, Malcolm, I. 148.
Irishmen, the first settlers of Iceland, viii.
Irishmen's Isles, Vestmanna-eyjar, i.
Irongrim of the Nip ; appears in Flosi's dream, II. 199.
Irpa, II. 24.
Isfirðinga Saga, cxiv.
Isleif Bishop, Gizur's son, I. 147.
Ivar Widefathom, father of Aud, son of Halfdan the clever, I. 78.

JALKETTLE, the son of Ref, II. 115.
Jamieson's Dictionary quoted, II. 398.
Jemtland, I. 14. II. 139.
John a Viking, II. 364.
John the Lawman, cxxxvi.
John, a legal fiction answering to N or M, clxxi. II. 245, 257.
John John's son's booth, cxxxvi.
Jodisa, II. 234.
Jokulsdalewater, iv, vi, clxiv.
Jokul rivers, iv.
Jokul water, vi.
Jomsborg, the vikings of, xxxi.
Jomsvikinga Saga quoted, II. 395.
Joreida, daughter of Thidrandi, II. 62.
Joruna the disowned, daughter of King Oswald the Saint, II. 115.
Jorund the priest, son of Rafn the foolish, lxxvii ; he succeeds Rafn the speaker, lxxviii ; his advice to Mord,

cxxxiii ; his counsel to Mord, I. 28 ; his son Valgard, 78.
Jorunn Ellidagrim's wife, daughter of Teit, Gizur's sister, lxxix. I. 80. II. 132.
Judges bound to be unanimous in sentencing, lxv, clvi ; number of, in suits, lxvi ; chosen by the priests, cxl ; regulations, cli, clii, clviii, clxxi.
Judicial districts, lxii.
Judicial duties, xlvii.
Jurisprudence, cxxiii, cli.
Jury trials, English, cxliii, cli, clxxi.
Juthemose, II. 396.

KADAL, father of Bjorn the white, II. 298.
Kæmpeviser or heroic ballads, cix.
Kalback, I. 51.
Kalbackshorn, I. 51.
Kamness, I. 4.
Kankaraborg, or Kantaraborg, Ceann Coradh (Kincora), cxciii.
Karf. *See* Eyvind.
Kari, Viking, father of Lord Baudvar, I. 80, 147.
Kari Solmund's son, xxxiii, xxxiv, lxxvii, xc, xcv, xcvi, xcvii, cxi, cxvii, cxix, clxxii, clxxiii, clxxxvii, cxcix ; one of Earl Sigurd's body guard, comes to the aid of Helgi and Grim, his armour and attire, II. 9, 10 ; slays Snowcolf the Viking, 11 ; goes to Hrossey, 12 ; tells Earl Sigurd of Njal's second sight, 13 ; slays Earl Melsnati in the battle with the Earls, 14 ; goes a sea-roving ; promises to meet Njal's sons in Norway with Earl Hacon's scatts, 15 ; succours Njal's sons ; meets Earl Hacon at Hlada, 37 ; refuses to give up Helgi and Grim, 38 ; fares a sea-roving with them, 39 ; goes with Njal's sons to Iceland ; marries Helgi Njal's daughter, 40 ; buys land at Dyrholms, but lives at Bergthorsknoll, 41, 42 ; he goes to Gritwater alone, 43 ; goes a second time with Njal's sons, 44, 45 ; his saying to Bergthora, 48 ; consults as to Thrain's slaying, 50 ; he sets out, his attire, 51 ; his sayings to Skarphedinn, 52, 53 ; his praise of Skarphedinn's feat, 54 ; he slays Tjorvi, 56 ; measures the length of Skarphedinn's leap, 56 ; Kol's slaying mentioned, 62 ; he goes to Swinefell, 81 ; he receives a silver belt from Mord Valgard's son, 103 ; Mord's slanders, 106, 108 ; at the slaying of Hauskuld the Whiteness priest, 109-111 ; a suit declared against him by Mord, 114 ; his plans, 128 ; he rides to the Thing, 130 ; he

goes with Njal's sons to seek aid, 132; he cannot restrain Skarphedinn, 143; he and Njal's sons remain armed in Njal's booth, 146; Njal pledges himself for him, 150; he pays his share of blood-money, 152; tells Njal he will share his fate, 160; he helps to defend Bergthors-knoll, 168, 169; promises Skarphedinn to stand by and avenge him, 170; his saying to Skarphedinn as he hewed down Hroald, 171; his son Thord remains in the burning house, 176; he flings the brands at Flosi, 177; advises Skarphedinn to escape, 178; leaps from the house and quenches his burning clothes in a stream, 179, 180; he is thought dead, 180; he gets Bard's horse; his saying of his sword "Life-luller," 182; Ingialld goes to meet him, 185; goes to Mord; to Hjallti; meets Ingialld, 188; rouses the country, 189, 190; Mord's advice, 191; he seeks and finds Njal and Bergthora's bodies, 192, 193; he gives the Ogress of War, Skarphedinn's axe, to Thorgeir, 194; buries Njal; rides to Tongue; Asgrim makes him welcome, 195; counsels him and promises him aid, 196; agrees to abide by Asgrim's advice, 197; his regrets for Njal and Bergthora, 198; he rides to Mossfell; Gizur makes him welcome; Kari's song on the Burning, 207; he thanks Gizur for his counsel; he rides to Holt; Thorgeir makes him welcome, 208; they ride to Mord's; his reproaches to Mord at Hof, 209; his friends swear to stand by him, 212; Asgrim tells him to ride early to the Thing with his son Thorhall, 213; he goes with Asgrim to seek help, 227, 228; he declares his suit against Kol, Gunnar, and Grani, 238; at the battle at the Althing; slays Arni Kol's son, 271; wounds Bjarni Broddhelgi's son, 273; slays Eyjolf Bolverk's son, 278; refuses to take atonement; Thorgeir stands by him, 279; no atonement taken for the burning of Thord, his son, 283; he gives Gudmund a gold brooch; he and Thorgeir ride to Thurso, 284; and across Markfleet, 286; thence to Myrdale, 287; thence to Carlinedalewater; they see the sons of Sigfus, 288; they wake them, 288; they slay five men, 288-291; he slays Sigmund Sigfus'

son, and Mord Sigfus' son, 289 ; also Leidolf the strong, 290 ; spares Kettle, 291 ; atonement spoken of, 293 ; he receives Hall of the Side at Holt, 294 ; will not take atonement, but prays Thorgeir to do so, 295-297 ; he leaves Holt ; places his wife and daughter under Thorgeir's care ; rides to the Mark, and stays with Bjorn the white, 298, 299, 300, 303, 304, 305 ; he and Bjorn ride into Flosi's country, 306, 307 ; they meet the sons of Sigfus ; he slays Modulf Kettle's son ; wounds Grani,. 308 ; slays Lambi, 309 ; and Thorstein Geirleif's son ; also Gunnar of Skal, 310 ; rides to Skal, and gives notice of manslayings, 310 ; thence to Skaptarwater, 311; he sleeps while Bjorn watches, 312 ; the sons of Sigfus pass him ; he slays Glum Hilldir's son, and wounds Asbrand ; he is wounded, 314 ; he will not slay Kettle, 314 ; comes back to Bjorn's farm ; praises him to his wife, 316 ; goes thence to Holt, 316 ; asks Thorgeir to protect Bjorn, 317 ; rides thence to Tongue, 317 ; fares abroad, 318 ; goes to David in the Fair Isle, 322; he and Kolbein the black land in the Orkneys, 322 ; they come to Hrossey, 325 ; he slays Gunnar Lambi's son, 325 ; escapes to Caithness, 326; sails to Scotland's Firths; thence to Wales, 344 ; slays Kol Thorstein's son, 345 ; he sails to Normandy, to England, and Caithness, 346, 347 ; he sails to Iceland ; wrecked at Ingolfshead ; goes to Swinefell ; Flosi makes him welcome ; they are fully atoned ; he has given to him Hildigunna to wife ; they dwell at Broadwater ; their children, 346-348.

Kari's pond, lxxi.

Kark the thrall slays Earl Hacon, II. 63.

Karli, son of Sjolf the old, of Gothland, a sea-rover, I. 86 ; sea-fight, 87 ; killed by Kolskegg, 89.

Korthialfad, clxxvi, cxciii, cxciv, cxcvii ; (Tirdelvach) King Kylfi's son, fostered by Brian, II. 323 ; bears the banner in Brian's battle, 334 ; slays two of Sigurd's banner bearers, 335 ; gives Thorstein peace, 336, 343 ; overpowers and slays Brodir, 337.

Kettle family, xlii.

Kettle flatnose, son of Bjorn boun, sent to subdue the Northmen, xi ; father of Aud and Thoruna the horned, I. 2. II. 115.

Kettle Hæing, a man from Naumdale in Norway, xxi, xlii, xliii, lxix, lxxi lxxii, lxxiii, lxxviii, lxxxi ; son of Hallbjorn halftroll, II. 78, 139. *See* Thorlauga and Rafn.
Kettle longneck, father of Thorkel the long, II. 77.
Kettle of Elda, II. 7 ; slain by Skapti Thorod's son, 134. *See* Olaf.
Kettle rumble, the son of Thorir, II. 62, 203, 272. *See* Thorwalld.
Kettle, son of Holmstein, at Beruness, hinders Thangbrand, II. 64.
Kettle, son of Sigfus, cousin of Gunnar, lives at Mark, lxxvi, xcii, clxxxvii. I. 101 ; marries Thorgerda, Njal's daughter, 101 ; he speaks to Thrain of Helgi and Grim's wrongs, II. 41 ; Thrain comes to Mark, 48 ; he goes with him to the Dale, 49 ; his difficulties on Thrain's death, 57 ; he fosters Thrain's son, 58 ; he is urged by Thorgerda to avenge Hauskuld's death, 113 ; joins Flosi, 125, 126 ; his saying to Flosi, 159 ; at the burning, 177 ; he listens to Flosi's dream, 198-200 ; at the Thing with Flosi, 248 ; Kari spares him, 290 ; he rides to Swinefell, 291 ; Flosi reminds him of the dream, 303 ; he goes to Fleetlithe, 304 ; attacks Kari, 314 ; Kari gives him peace, 314.
Kettle, son of Thorir, II. 78.
Kettle the bishop, II. 116.
Kettle the fat, father of Thorgrim, II. 148.
Kettle the foolish, father of Thorstein, II. 67.
Kettle the seal, son of Ornolf, II. 78, 139.
Kettle the smooth-tongued, I. 185.
Kettlebjörn the old of Mossfell, xliv, lxxviii, xciv, cxxv. I. 80, 146 ; brother of Hallkell, 147 ; his daughter Thorkatla, 147.
Killing-Skuti. *See* Skuti.
Kincora (Ceann Coradh), near Killaloe in county Clare, the palace of King Brian, cxcii, cxciii.
King's Crag, I. 7, 9, 17. II. 389.
Kirkby, Otkell's dwelling, lxxxvii. I. 148, 153, 154.
Kirkby, Surt's dwelling, II. 67, 118, 149.
Kirkwall, cxv.
Kitchen, xcix, c.
Kjartan, cxc.
Kjarval, the Erse king, II. 115, 116.
Knafahills, the fight at, mentioned, lxxxviii. I. 196, 199, 200.
Knappvale, II. 200.
Knoll, the, near Dufthaksholt, xxi.

Kol murdered by Thorir cropbeard, liii.
Kol, Thorstein's son, slain in Wales by Flosi, xcvii.
Kol, Hallgerda's grieve, lxxxv. I. 107 ; slays Swart, 109 ; slain by Atli, 115.
Kol Egil's son, I. 185 ; he and Thorgeir push their horse against Gunnar, 191 ; means to attack Kolskegg, 196 ; jeers at Gunnar and Kolskegg, 200 ; slain by Kolskegg, 203 ; fixed upon as the slayer of Hjort, 209 ; suit on his slaying, 211, 213.
Kol, son of Asmund Ashside, a sea rover, II. 2 ; pursued by Thrain, 4 ; slain, 5.
Kol, son of Thorstein broadpaunch, II. 62 ; summoned by Flosi, 118 ; joins him, 157 ; lays fire to Bergthorsknoll, 173 ; named in Flosi's dream, 199 ; suit declared against him, 238 ; exiled, 283 ; comes to Swinefell, 291 ; he goes to Hornfirth, 302 ; Kari says he means to kill him, 317 ; he makes love to a mighty dame in Wales, Kari strikes off his head, 345. *See* Arni.
Kol Hall of the Side's son goes with his father to Holt, II. 293, 296.
Kol Killing-Skuti's son, II. 221.
Kol, one of Flosi's band, slain at the Thing, II. 275.
Kolbein the young, sprung from Valgard, I. 78.
Kolbein, Arnljots's son, a Drontheim man, comes to Iceland, II. 16 ; takes Hrapp thence to Norway, 17 ; his parting advice to Hrapp, 18.
Kolbein, Egil's son, Flosi's brother's son, II. 118.
Kolbein Flosi's son, a famous man, II. 349.
Kolbein son of Thord Freyspriest, brother of Flosi, II. 61 ; slays Arnor Ornolf's son, of Forswaterwood, 123 ; joins Flosi, 158 ; his son. *See* Thorstein.
Kolbein the black, an Orkneyman, gives Kari a passage across the Iceland main, II. 318 ; they put out to sea, 322 ; he goes to Hrossey, 325 ; to Wales, 344 ; to Norway, 347.
Kolli, a Norwegian (or Dale-Kolli), father of Hauskuld, lxxx. *See* Dala-Kolli.
Kolskegg Hamond's son, Gunnar's brother, lxxxviii. I. 60 ; goes abroad with Gunnar, 84, 86 ; at the sea-fight with Vandil and Karli, 87 ; fights with Kolskegg Halgrim's brother, 92 ; returns with Gunnar to Iceland, 95 ; rides with Gunnar to the Thing, 96, 118 ; on Atli's death, 120 ; warns Njal, 127 ; goes with Gunnar to Kirkby, 149 ;

tells Gunnar that Hallgerda's theft is in every one's mouth, 157; that Gunnar must offer Otkell atonement, 157; wrath at the summons, 163; is to challenge Geir the priest, 165; follows Gunnar, 173, 174; slays Hallkell, 176; at Lithend, 187; kills Gunnar's horse, 191; reply to Thorgeir, 192; rides with Gunnar to Tongue, 194, 195; watches Gunnar dreaming, 198; slays a yeoman, 201; at Knafahills, 200-203; slays Kol, 203; slays Hauk, 204; rides with Gunnar to Njal, 206; his wound, 212; suit, 214; claims Moeidsknoll, 216; saying to Gunnar on the Thorgeirs, 216; at the isles, 218; rides with Gunnar, 225; slays Augmund shockhead, 227; eager to continue the fight, 228; atonement for manslaughter; banished, 233; takes passage with Arnfin, 235; leaves Lithend and rides to the Bay, 236; parts with Gunnar at Markfleet; farewell, 237; missed, 239; comes to Norway, then to Denmark, 255; dream, 256; baptized in Denmark, fares to Russia, and on to Micklegarth, becomes captain of the Varangians, marries and dies there, 256, II. 16.

Kolskegg, brother of Hallgrim, I. 89; his short sword, 90; slain by Gunnar, 92.

Kormak, cxcii; his Saga, c; songs, cxxi; his love for Steingerda, II. 415.

Kormlada, a fair woman, queen of King Brian, clxxxix, cxcv. II. 323; is parted from her husband, her wrath, 324; her hand promised to Sigurd, 327; and to Brodir the Viking, 328; at Dublin, 334.

Kötlugjá, vi.

Kringlemire, II. 312.

Kristni Saga quoted, xci.

Kunjattaborg, or Connaught, cxciii. Misreading for Kankaraborg.

Kveldulf, father of Skallagrim, xxi.

Kviðr, or inquest, clxxi-clxxvi.

Kylfi, King, father of Kerthialfad, II. 323.

Labrador discovered by the Northmen, cxvi.

Lagarfleet, iv, vi. II. 203.

Lake fishing, cxiv.

Lambi, brother of Fiddle Mord, lxxxvi.

Lambi, son of Sighvat the red, father of Sigmund, I. 126.

Lambi, son of Sigmund, lxxiii.

Lambi Sigfus' fifth son, I. 102; meets Flosi, II. 125; joins his band, 158, is slain by Kari, 309.

Lambi Sigurd's son rides with Gunnar to Kirkby, I. 149; he goes with Thrain on his cruise, II. 3; rides with Thrain, 44; he stands by him at Gritwater, 45; goes with him to the Dale, 48; he sees Njal's sons, 52, 53; has peace granted to him, 56; is at Lyting's feast, 88; refuses to break the peace, 89; meets Flosi with the sons of Sigfus, he wishes the death of Njal's sons, 126; he is called in Flosi's dream, 199; Thorgrim declares a suit against him, 238; tries to run Kari through with a spear; escapes, 289.
Lambi's son. *See* Gunnar.
Land, gifts of, xliv.
Land isles (landeyjar), lxix, lxxvii, xciii, cxii.
Land, mode of occupying, xxxvi.
Landing places on the coast, cxviii.
Landlord and tenant, xliii.
Landnám, xlii, xlvii, lxxvii.
Landnáma book, book of lots, quoted, xxi, lxxv, lxxvi, xcix, cxxv. II. 353, 354; preface, xi, xii.
Landnámsmenn, or early settlers, xxxvii.
Landnamtide, the, xxxv, xlv, lxxi.
Landsbreach, II. 304.
Lánganes, iv.
Látrarröst, iii.
Laugardale taken by Kettlebjörn the old, lxxviii, cxxv; near the site of the Geysers, cxxxix.
Laugarness, Hallgerda lives at, lxxxiii, cxx, cxxi; belongs to Olof's sons, I. 44, 50.
Laugarwater, II. 217.
Laufesingers' priesthood, II. 86.
Lava (jarðeldr, Lavafield), iv, vi, xci, cxxx, cxxxvii.
Law, Icelandic, cxl; code of, lii; incompetency, clii; amendment of, clviii; law suit, cxlii; sketch of a suit, cxlvi; list of the speakers, lix; law of debtor and creditor, cxix.
Lawyers, or Lawmen (Lögmenn), lii, lvi; have no official character, lvi. I. 49.
Laxdæla quoted, lxxx, lxxxii, lxxxviii, cvi, cxix.
Laxriverdale, I. 1, 66, 72.
Laxriverdale Heath, I. 26.
Laxwater bank, II. 129.
Leið, Leet, or Autumn Court, lxvi.
Leidolf the strong, II. 238; fights with Thorgeir, is slain by Kari, 290.
Leinster people pay fines to Brian, cxc.
Lewes, the, the Northmen in, xi, clxxxiv.
Life-luller (Kari's sword). *See* Kari.
Lightwater, lix, xci, cxxxiv, cxxxv, cxxxvii, cxxxviii. II.

77, 78, 138, 139, 144, 213, 222.
Limerick, cxc, cxcii, cxciii.
Limgard's side, I. 16.
Lindesnaes, I. 82.
Liot the black, I. 39.
Liotriverdale, I. 40.
Lithe, Geir the priest's dwelling, lxxix, lxxxvii. I. 147.
Lithe, the, I. 141.
Lithemen, their booths at the Althing, cxxxviii, cxxxix. I. 180.
Lithend, Gunnar's dwelling, lxxii, lxxv, lxxxv, cvii, cx. I. 62, 108, 114, 136, 152, 155, 172, 219. II. 1, 3, 6, 49, 51, 57, 169, 182, 230, 299.
Ljósvetníinga Saga, cxiv.
Ljot, son of Hall of the Side, cxxix, cxxx, clxxxviii. II. 62; a hopeful man, 118; he is called in Flosi's dream, 198; rides to the Thing, 206; his father prays him to part the fighters, 274; he is slain, 278; his father's grief, 281.
Lodinn, Thrain's serving-man, II. 44; rides with Thrain, 48; peace is granted him, 56.
Lodmund, son of Swart, xxxvi. I. 78.
Lodmund Wolf's son dwells at Solheim, II. 119.
Lögberg. *See* Hill of Laws.
Lögmaðr (pl. Lögmenn), lawyers or counsel, clxx, clxxi.
Loki, in the Icelandic Mythology, lxxxix.
Lokrekkjur, or bedroom, cii.
Lon, the abode of Ullljót, lii. II. 200.
Longisle, II. 35. *See* Aslak.
Longness, iv.
Lonsheath, II. 66.
Loomnip, II. 198.
Loomnip's Sand, II. 159, 293.
Looms used in Iceland, cxiv.
Lopt's son. *See* Thorolf.
Lord's day, II. 80, 158, 163, 164.
Lund Thiostolf's dwelling, I. 29.
Lyting, dwells at Samstede, a tall man ill to do with, xciii, xciv. II. 88; makes a feast, 88; urges the sons of Sigfus to break the peace, 89; slays Hauskuld, 90; attacked by Njal's sons, 95, 96, 97; he is at the Thing, 98; is slain by Amund the blind, 99; Hauskuld tries to make peace for him, 100; name spoken of in atonements and suits, 100, 105, 106.
Lyting, the father of Halla, II. 205.
Lyting from Axefirth, II. 221.

Madox Hist. Exchequer cited, II. 403.
Mælar, I. 14.
Mæren, Earl of. *See* Rognvald.
Magic and sorcery, xxiii.
Magnus the quiet, civ.

Magnusen Finn quoted, cxiv.
Mahon, King of Munster, cxcii.
Malachi the Second, over-king of Ireland, cxcii.
Malcolm the Scot king, II. 8; gathers a host at Duncansby, 14.
Malcolm, Earl, at Whithorn, Galloway, xcvii. II. 345.
Malcolm the Irish thrall given to Otkell, I. 148; steals food from Kirkby and burns the store-house, 151, 152; leaves his knife and belt by Rang-river, 152, 154.
Man, Isle of, xi. II. 328. The king of, 15; *see* Godred; two Vikings lie off the coast, 328.
Manslaughter, suits for, cxlvii.
Mar, son of Runolf, I. 148.
Mar the son of Atli, II. 64.
Marcus Skeggi's son's booth, cxxxvi.
Margad Brian's son, II. 323.
Mark, the (Mörk), Kettle's dwelling, lxxvi, xcii. II. 41, 49, 57, 58, 59, 113, 125, 126, 158, 177, 198, 248.
Mark, the name of three farms, II. 298.
Mark, or Midmark, Bjorn's dwelling, II. 298, 304, 317.
Markfleet, or Markarfljót, i, ii, vi, xlii, lxviii, lxix, lxx, lxxi, lxxvi, lxxvii, lxxviii, cx, clxxxvi. I. 61, 108, 109, 144, 168, 172. II. 49, 50, 106, 126, 142, 165, 180, 208, 286, 298.
Markfleet-men, their booths at the Althing, cxxx, cxxxix.
Marriage, cxx, cxxi, cxxiv.
Marshes, cxi.
Massachussets, cxvi.
Mattul the Finn King, II. 378.
Mauratongue, II. 158.
Maurer quoted, liii, lvi, lvii, cxx, clii, clxx, clxxi, clxxxix, cxci.; II. 71, 360; preface xvii.
Mead, xl, cxv.
Meal, cxviii.
Meals, cxv.
Meðalland (Middleland), v.
Meeting, or Thing, li.
Melmen in Midfirth, II. 86.
Melsnati, Earl, slays Havard Sigurd's brother-in-law, II. 13; is slain by Kari, 14.
Merchant ships (or byrðings), their cargoes, cxvii.
Metcalfe, the Rev. Frederick, B.D., of Lincoln College, Oxford, his account of the south-west of Iceland, lxix-lxxi.
Michael the archangel, II. 65.
Micklabæ, xcix.
Micklegarth (Constantinople), x. I. 256.
Middlefells Strand, under the Fell, Thorwald's dwelling, I. 31.
Middleland, v. II. 304, 308, 312.
Midfirth, Skeggi's dwelling, II. 86, 219.

Midgard's worm, xvii.
Midmark, II. 315.
Mimer, clxxi.
Modolf the wise, of Mossfell, brother of Aud, I. 185. II. 61.
Modolf, Kettle's son, summoned by Flosi, II. 118; one of Flosi's daysmen, 149; stands by Flosi, 158; sings a song after the burning, 183; his name called in Flosi's dream, 199; suit declared against him by Thorleif, 238; is slain by Kari, 308.
Modruvale (or Möðruvellir), the abode of Gudmund the powerful, iv, cxxxvii, cxxxviii. II. 115, 276.
Moeidsknoll, I. 214; claimed by Kolskegg, 216, 217, 222.
Moldan of Duncansby, II. 8, 12.
Money borrowing, cxix.
Money and Currency in tenth century, II. 397-416.
Moray in Earl Sigurd's possession, II. 14.
Mord, or Fiddle Mord, son of Sigmund, lxxiii; and grandson of Sigvat the red, lxxxi; his legal skill, lxxiv, lxxv, lxxvi; his age, lxxv, lxxvi; betrothes his sister to Hamond, lxxv; his daughter to Hrut, lxxxiv; his brother Lambi, lxxxvi; his temple in the vale, xciv; his booth, cxxxvi; his quarrel with Hrut, lxxxiii; his death, lxxxiv; mentioned, cxxxiii. I. 1; bargain for his daughter, 3, 4, 5; breaks his bargain with Hrut, 7; makes ready Unna's bridal feast, 20; pays Unna's portion, 21; advice to Unna, 22; claims his goods from Hrut, 27; challenged to fight, 28; forfeits his claim, 29; dies, 59; his fame, 67, 71.
Mord the reckless, who slew Oddi, II. 34.
Mord Valgard's son, lxxxviii, lxxxix, xciv, xcv, xcvi, cxxxiii, cxxxviii, cxliii, clv, clxx, clxxxvi, clxxxviii. I. 78; at Gunnar's wedding, 102; dwells at Hof, 147; envious of Gunnar, 147; counsels Otkell, 155; sends women through the country; they bring proofs of Hallgerda's theft, 156; does not interfere at Otkell's slaying, 176; counsels Starkad, 208; asks for Thorkatla, Gizur the white's daughter, 208; eggs Thorgeir to set his suit on foot, 208; rides to the Thing, 210; inquiry as to Hjort's death, 211; admits the goodness of Njal's law, 212; inquiry as to the outlawry, 212; counsels Thorgeir, 214, 215; blames the two Thorgeirs, 222; speaks for them at the Thing, 222; evil counsel, 224, 225; plotting, 225; summoned, 238; he is

to keep watch over Gunnar, 238 ; sends word to Gunnar's enemies, 240 ; counsels them to pull the roof off the house, 244 ; advises that the house should be burned, 244 ; begs Hogni for mercy, 253 ; pays his atonement, 255 ; dwells at Hof ; obstructs Thangbrand, II. 68 ; Valgard comes to Hof, 100 ; is reproved by him, 101 ; is taught by him to beguile Njal's sons, 102 ; he rides to Bergthorsknoll, invites Njal's sons to a feast, 103 ; his slanders, 105, 106 ; he comes to Bergthorsknoll, 108 ; urges Njal's sons to slay Hauskuld Thrain's son, 109 ; at the slaying of Hauskuld, 110 ; his treacherous plan of giving notice of the slaying, 111 ; tells Thorgerda of her son's slaying, 111 ; goes to Gritwater, 113 ; takes up the suit, 113, 114 ; he meets Flosi at Holtford, 125 ; he offers to ride to the Thing ; his daughter Rannveiga, 127 ; he rides to the Thing, 128, 131, 132 ; he makes the suit over to the sons of Sigfus, 144 ; his share in the slaying told to Gizur and others, 145, 147 ; the suit comes to naught, 147 ; Kari comes to him at Hof after the burning, 188 ; he meets Kari at Holtford, 189 ; his cunning counsel, 190, 191 ; he has promised Kari aid, 196 ; he is forced by Kari, Thorgeir, and Gizur, to undertake the suit against Flosi, 197, 209 ; his wife threatens to leave him, 209 ; he summons nine neighbours, and sets the suit on foot against Flosi for the Burning, 210-212 ; he goes to the Thing with Thorgeir and others, 218 ; Asgrim talks with him, 227 ; at the declaration of the suit at the Hill of Laws he is one of the readiest tongued of men, he takes witness that he gave the notice of assault, 235 ; also that he gives notice of a suit against Flosi, 236, 237 ; Asgrim comes to him before he goes in to the Eastfirthers' Court, he takes witness, and the prosecutors cast lots who shall first declare his suit, the lot falls to him, he takes witness to save himself from all mistakes, 241 ; also that he shall plead the suit lawfully, 242 ; he calls his witnesses, 241-243 ; also the inquest of his neighbours ; he bids Flosi challenge the inquest, 247 ; he again takes witness that he has brought for-

ward all proofs, 247 ; is replied to by Eyjolf ; his witnesses objected to, 248 ; he consults Thorhall, 249 ; his reply, 250 ; Eyjolf challenges two more witnesses, 250 ; Thorhall's advice and Mord's reply, 251 ; another flaw discovered, 253 ; he replies, 254 ; he begs the neighbours in the inquest to utter their finding, 255 ; the verdict, 256, 257 ; he takes witness of the verdict, 257 ; Eyjolf's defence, 258, 259 ; Thorhall tells him to summon Eyjolf and Flosi into the Fifth Court for contempt, 260, 261 ; he summons them at the Hill of Laws, 261, 262 ; he comes to the Fifth Court, 263, 264 ; proceedings in the Fifth Court, 263-265 ; he makes a false step, 269 ; Eyjolf sees it and takes witness that they must be made outlaws, 269 ; he assists at the onslaught at the Thing, 270-273 ; he makes an atonement with Flosi, 282.

Mord Sigfus' fourth son, I. 102 ; stands by Flosi, II. 158 ; is slain by Kari, 289.

Morðvig, or murder, xxxiii.

Moorkjartan, the Erse king, I. 223.

Mork, Mark, farm at, lxxi.

Mossfell, the dwelling of Kettlebjörn the old, lxxix ; the men of, lxxxvii ; their booths at the Althing, cxxxi, cxxxvii, cxxxviii, cxxxix. I. 97, 149, 208.

Mossfell, Gizur the white's dwelling, II. 78, 207.

Mostrarskegg, II. 117. *See* Thorolf.

Mull, clxxxiv.

Munch Det Norske Folks Historie quoted, cxciii, cxcv. II. 379, 384, 395, 396, 399, 400.

Munster, Mahon, king of, cxcii ; Brian rules in, cxciii.

Murder, xxxiii, xxxiv.

Mydale, or Myrdale, II. 41, 286, 287, 293.

Myrdal Jökul, vi.

Myrka, II. 136.

NADDAD of the Faroe Isles, I. 148.

Names of the western islands of Scotland, clxxxiv.

Naumdale, in Norway, xlii.

Naze. *See* Lindesnaes, I. 82.

Neal, Neill, the name of, cxcii.

Nereida, Earl Gilli's wife, Earl Sigurd's sister, II. 40.

Nidaros, Drontheim, II. 1.

Nip, Bard's dwelling, II. 78, 138. *See* Loom-nip.

Njal " of the nine hostages," the Irish king, cxcii.

Njal — birth, lxxvii ; son of Thorgeir Gelling, uncle to Thorgeir Craggeir, lxxvii ; his name mentioned, xix,

xxiv, xxix, lx, lxviii, lxx, lxxvii, lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvi, lxxxvii, lxxxix, xc, xcii, xciii, xciv, xcv, xcvi, xcviii, ci, cvii, cxii, cxiii, cxv, cxvii, cxix, cxxi, cxxx, cxxxi, cxxxiv, cxxxvi, cxxxviii, cxli, cxlii, cxliii, cxlvii, cxlviii, cl, cliv, clvi, clix, clx, clxi, clxvii, clxx, clxxiii, clxxxvi, clxxxvii, cxcii. I. 61; dwells at Bergthorsknoll, 61; character, 61; has the second sight, 62; has to wife Bergthora, 62; counsel to Gunnar on Unna's suit, 64-69; at the Althing, 74, 75, 77; his sons, 78, chooses a wife for Skarphedinn, 79; thinks ill of Unna's marriage, 78; counsel to Gunnar, 83; takes care of Gunnar's goods, 84; welcome to Gunnar; his foresight as to Gunnar; dissuades him from going to the Thing, 96; takes Gunnar's news of his marriage heavily, 100; he and Bergthora are bidden to Gunnar's wedding, 101; speaks for Thrain, 104; welcomes Gunnar and his wife at Bergthorsknoll, 105; his and Gunnar's wood at Redslip, 107; rides to the Thing, 107; awards the atonement for Swart, 110; rides to the Thing, 113; counsel to Atli, 117; makes atonement for Kol, 117; rides to the Thing, 119; makes the award for Atli, 121; hears of Brynjolf's slaying; pays the atonement, 125; warned of Hallgerda's designs on Thord, 127; warns Thord, 128; rides to the Thing, 129; hears of Thord's slaying, 132; on Thord's slaying, 133, makes the award; tells his sons; his sons keep the peace, 134; his sons hear of the mocking at Lithend, 140; answer to Bergthora on the mocking at Lithend, 140; hears of the slaying of Sigmund and Skiolld, 144; offers an atonement, unasked, for Sigmund, 145, 146; hears of Otkell's refusal, 150; comes to Lithend with hay and meat, 150; counsels Gunnar, 163, 164; rides to the Thing, 164; advice to Gunnar, 177, 178; foreknows his own death, 178; on Gunnar's suit, 183; on the horse fight, 189; at the horse fight, 190; trys to make peace, 192; at the Thing, 193; warns Gunnar of the Threecorner men, 194, 195; counsels Gunnar as to the slaying at Knafahills, 206, 209; rides to the Thing, 210; reply to Mord, 211, 212; defence of Gunnar, 211; has money

out at usance with Starkad and at Sandgil; gives it to Gunnar, 213; in the award of Thorgeir's suit, 213; at Thorolfsfell, 218; visions, 219; sends the shepherd to warn Gunnar of Thorgeir's band, and to go to Gritwater, 219; rides to meet the Thorgeirs; what he said, 220; meets Gunnar, 220; his counsel as to the Thorgeirs, 221; makes peace for the Thorgeirs; to make the award, 221; on Gunnar's suit, 222, 223; rides to the Thing, 222; chooses twelve men as judges in the suit, Njal keeps the money, 223; advice to Gunnar as to Thorgeir's slaying; promises him help, 230; defence of Gunnar for Thorgeir's man-slaying, 230; the atonement, 233; warning to Gunnar, 237; offers his sons' help to Gunnar, 239; returns from the Thing and tells Gunnar of his outlawry, 239; sorrow for Gunnar, 248; told of Gunnar's singing in his cairn, 250; share in awarding the atonement, 255; he gives his daughter Helga to Kari, II. 40; counsels Kettle of the Mark to advise Thrain, 41; his advice to his sons on Thrain's refusal to make atonement, 42, 43; asks his sons if they called witnesses to the insult at Gritwater, 47; he talks with his family, 49; asks Skarphedinn where he is going, 51; he waits at home while his sons slay Thrain, 52; his spaedom on hearing Thrain's death, 57; pays the blood money, 58; he takes Hauskuld, Thrain's son, to foster, 59; his love for the boy, 60; Njal takes the Christian faith, 68; stands by Thangbrand at the Thing, 71; he bestows gifts on Thangbrand, 75; seeks a wife for Hauskuld, 80, 81; his wise counsel at the Thing, 82, 83; he has a fifth court established, 86; obtains a priesthood for Hauskuld, 86; his continued love for Hauskuld Thrain's son, 87; Rodny fetches the dead body of his son Hauskuld to the sheep cote, 91; he fixes the slaying upon Lyting, 92; he grants Lyting atonement for Hauskuld Thrain's son's sake, 96, 97; his rebuke to Grim for allowing Lyting to escape, 98; offers an atonement for Lyting's slaying, 100; Njal dislikes Mord coming to Bergthorsknoll, 103; Mord slanders him, 105; he takes Thord Kari's son as his foster, also Thorhall Asgrim's son, 108; he

is not in his sons' counsels, 109; his grief at Hauskuld's slaying, 111, 112, 119, 120; Ingialld's gratitude to him, 125; he asks his sons what course they intend to take, 128; he rides to the Thing with them, 129; his attire, his saying to Asgrim, 130; he talks with Asgrim, 132; his reply to Asgrim and his sons on their return from seeking aid, 143, 144; he prays the judges to go into court, 146; he begs he may make an atonement, names his daysmen, 149; pledges himself for his sons, 150; thanks the judges for their award, 152; fetches his sons, 153; goes back to his booth, his reflections, his spaedom, 156; rides from the Thing, and remains at Bergthorsknoll, 160, 161; he thanks Rodny for her intercession, 162; his spaedom, 167; he bids his household to be on their guard, 168; he tells his sons to retire within the house, 169, 170; the house is fired, 173; comforts the women folk, 173; asks Flosi to take an atonement for his sons, 174; tells the women and house carles to take advantage of Flosi's offer, 174; refuses to escape without his sons, 175; he retires to his bed, his steward covers him with an ox hide, 176; gives his soul into God's hand, 177; his burning mentioned, 181, 183, 190; his bones sought, 192; his body is found by Kari, 192; it is uninjured, 193; he is spoken of, 195, 197, 215, 229, 237, 254, 256; atonement for his slaying, 282, 292, 298, 299, 348, 349.

Njal's sons. *See* Skarphedinn, Helgi, Grim, and Hauskuld.

Njal's daughters. *See* Thorgerda, Helga.

Njord, xli, lviii.

Njordwick, II. 62, 203.

Normandy, clxxvii. II. 346, 347.

Norse Jarls in the Western Isles, xi, xii.

North Cape, iv.

North Sea, I. 82.

Northlanders' quarter, lxi, lxii, cxxxiv, cxxxix. II. 86; booth, 233; court, 239, 258.

Northmen, viii, x, xxviii, xxxv, xcvii, cxlvi, clxxxiii, clxxxiv, clxxxv, cxcii, cxciii.

Northumberland granted to Eric Bloodaxe, II. 382, 383.

Northwaterdale, I. 66.

Norway, v, vii, ix, xiii, xxxv, lii, lxxii, lxxvi, lxxx, xc, xci, xcvii, xcviii, civ, cxvi, cxviii, cxli, clxxii, clxxiii,

clxxiv, clxxvii, clxxx, clxxxii, clxxxiv. I. 17, 82, 83, 84. II. 1, 2, 15, 18, 23, 46, 54, 136, 139, 346, 347, 348.

Oaths, xxxviii, lviii, cxxiii, cxlvi, cxlix, clviii.
Oats grown in Iceland, cx, cxi.
Oblaud, the son of Hjorleif, II. 64.
O'Brien's Dictionary quoted, cxciii.
Oddi Kol's son, cxciii.
Oddi of Kidberg, I. 180.
Oddi Haldor's son, II. 34.
Oddleif's son. *See* Gest.
Oddny, wife of Hallbjorn the strong, II. 201.
Odin, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xxvii, xxviii, xxxii, xli, cliii, cxcv, cxcvi. II. 45, 71.
Odin's corse-choosers (Valkyriur), xxvii, cxcvi.
Ogmund's booth, cxxxvi.
Ogress of War, Skarphedinn's axe. *See* Skarphedinn.
O'Kelly, king of Hy Maine, cxciii.
Olaf Thickleg, II. 381.
Olaf the peacock, Hauskuld's showy son, invites the chiefs to his "arvel" feast, lxxxviii, cvi. I. 192; bids Gunnar come and see him, 193; at the Thing, praises Njal, 211; gifts to Gunnar, 223; warning to Gunnar, 224. II. 390.
Olaf, a tributary to Edmund, II. 383.
Olaf, Tryggvi's son (or Tryggvason), king, xci, cxxxv, clxxxiv, cxc; he succeeds Earl Hacon, II. 63; sends missionaries to Iceland, 64; Thangbrand tells him of his treatment in Iceland, 76. II. 360, 361, 397; his Saga quoted, 395.
Olaf treefeller, the Swedish king, xxxix.
Olaf Kettle's son of Elda, I. 235; sails with Njal's son, II. 7; urges the chapmen to fight, 8; slain by Snowcolf, 9, 10. *See* Kettle.
"Olafs Saga" quoted, xx, ciii.
Olaf rattle, father of King Sigtrygg, II. 323.
Olafsen, or Olavius and Povelsen's journey through Iceland quoted, cxi, cxiv.
Oleif the broad, son of Oliver bairncarle, I. 180.
Oleif the white, the son of Ingialld, I. 1. II. 117.
Oleif feilan, or Oleif the shy, the son of Thorstein the red, II. 117, 219.
Oliver of Hisingen, I. 85; gives Gunnar two longships, 86; welcome to Gunnar, 94; gift to Gunnar, 173, 195; saying regarding Gunnar's bill, 226.
Oliver bairncarle, I. 180. II. 354.
Oliver, the son of Eyvalld, II. 204.

Olof the halt, I. 44.
Olof harvest-heal, mother of Bergliot, daughter of Harold fairhair, I. 84 ; Jorunn's mother, 80.
Olof, daughter of Lord Baudvar, Gizur's mother, I. 147.
Olof Hauskuld's son at Gunnar's wedding, I. 102.
Olvuswater (or Ölfus), lxix, lxxiii ; irruption at, xci ; the men of, II. 133.
Omens, xxiii.
On the, Swedish king, xxxviii.
Ondverðarness, iii.
Onund the little slain, lxxiii ; his sons avenge him, lxxiv.
Oresound, I. 14.
Orfir, Earl Paul's hall at, cvi.
Orkney Islands, viii, x, xi, xc, cv, cxi, cxvi, clxxii, clxxiii, clxxxiv, clxxxix, cxc, cxci. II. 7, 11, 12, 23, 37, 40, 63, 318, 320, 322, 324, 327, 333, 342.
Orkney Saga quoted, cvi, cxv, cxc. II. 358, 369, 376.
Orm the strong, son of Storolf, brother of Hrafnhilda, lxxiii. I. 60.
Orm Skogarnef, I. 61 ; a base born brother of Gunnar, 61.
Ormilda, Gunnar's kinswoman, I. 224, 225.
Orn, a kinsman of Gunnar, lxxiv ; is slain, lxxiv.
Ornolf, I. 180.
Ornolf, fish-driver, II. 117.
Ornolf, son of Bjornolf, II. 78, 139.
Ornolf's son. *See* Arnor.
Örœfa Jökul, v.
Ösel (Eysýsla), I. 89.
Oska, daughter of Thorstein the red, II. 117.
Ospak the Viking, clxxxix, cxciii, cxciv ; lies off the coast of the Isle of Man, II. 328 ; refuses to fight against Brian, 329 ; makes known to Brodir the interpretation of the wonders on board his ships, 331, 332 ; takes baptism, 332 ; is in Brian's battle with his sons, 334 ; sorely wounded, 336.
Ossaby, Hauskuld Thrain's son's dwelling, xciii, xcv, c. II. 87, 95, 104, 107, 108, 109, 111, 114, 120.
Oswald the saint, II. 115.
Oswif Thorwald's father, tells his son what he thinks of Hallgerda, I. 31 ; at Hauskuldstede, 31 ; at the wedding, 34 ; has forebodings, 35 ; pursues Thiostolf, 40 ; baffled, 41 ; goes to Hauskuld, 42 ; the atonement, 42 ; shares Thorwald's goods with Hauskuld and Hrut, 43.
Oswif's daughter. *See* Gudruna, II. 116.
Otkell the son of Skarf, and grandson of Hallkell, lxxix,

lxxxvii, lxxxviii, lxxxix, xcviii, cx, cxii, cxiii, cxli, cxlii ; dwells in Kirkby, I. 147 ; marries Thorgerda, 148 ; his wealth, friendship for Skamkell, 148 ; refuses to deal with Gunnar, 149 ; sells him a thrall, 150 ; hears of the burning of his storehouse, 153 ; knows Malcolm's knife and belt, 154 ; goes to Mord Valgard's son, 154 ; meets Gunnar and his friends outside Kirkby, 157 ; refuses Gunnar's offered atonement, 158 ; prepares to ride to Gizur the white and Geir the priest, 160 ; Skamkell rides instead, 160 ; summons Gunnar of Lithend, 163 ; rides to the Thing, 164 ; warned, 166 ; gives Runolf an ox, 168 ; his two horses, 169 ; visits Runolf, 169 ; rides over Gunnar, 170 ; comes to the Dale, 171 ; leaves the Dale, 172 ; slain by Gunnar, 176 ; atonement for his slaying, 181, 182, 184.

Otryg, the son of Oblaud, II. 64.

Otrygg, a baresark, comes to Hagi in Bardastrand, II. 73 ; slain by Thangbrand, 74, 75.

Ottar Egil's son, I. 185 ; his hand hewn off, 204.

Otterdale, Eyjolf the guileful's dwelling, II. 219.

Outlaws and outlawry, cxxiv, clxi, clxii, clxiv, clxvi, clxvii.

Outwork - booth (Virkisbuð), cxxxi. II. 275.

Öxará (Axewater), cxxvii.

Oxen sacrificed, xl.

Oxen-Thorir, the father of Eyvalld, II. 204.

Oxenlava, II. 206.

Oxford Essays (1858), "Norsemen in Iceland," xxv.

Palm Sunday, cxciv. II. 328, 332, 333.

Palnatoki's arrow, xxxiii.

Papa in the Orkneys, viii.

Papar, Culdee anchorites, viii.

Papey (Little) in Orkney, cxv.

Passion week, cxciv.

Paul's (Earl) Hall at Orfir, cvi.

Pentland Firth, II. 13.

Permia. *See* Biarmaland, I. 83.

Peter the apostle, II. 336.

Petersen's Essays in the "Annaler for Nordesk Oldkyndighed," II. 397.

Picts of Scotland, x, xi.

Pillars, sacred, xxxvi.

Pledges, peace, form of, clxviii-clxx.

Point, I. 248, 252.

Point dwellers, I. 78. II. 116.

Pomona, II. 12.

Pool, holy, where the human sacrifices were sank, xxxviii.

Pope, II. 346.

Population of Iceland, xlv.

Porridge-Atli, the son of Thorir Thidrandi, II. 205.

Portland, or Dyrholaey, i, v.
Priest of the whole host (Allsherjargoði), liv, cxxxv.
Priests (Goðipe Godar), viii, xiii; their civil power, xlvi-li; their power in the Court of Laws, lvi; they lose their independent jurisdiction, lix; they receive the fines for non-attendance at the Althing, cxxiv; they lodge the Thingmen, cxxiv; their opposition to Njal's scheme, clxi.
Priesthoods (Goðorð), they become family property and are bought and sold, xlix, xciii; subject to the will of the Thingmen, l; regulated, lx; three in each local Thing, lxii; change regarding the number of, lxiii; each possesses a court of its own, lxiv.
Property, security of, cxviii, cxix.
Prophecy, belief in the power of, among the Northmen, xxiv.
Provincial organization, lx.
Public life, cxxiii.
Public opinion, xlix.

QUAKEWATER, vi.
Quarter Courts at the Althing, or Fjórðungsdómr; their constitution, lxvii; their place at the Althing, lxiii, cxxiii, cxxxiii, cxxxvi, cxxxviii; sketch of a trial, cxlv; mentioned, cxl, clii, clvii. I. 27. II. 84, 85, 145, 236, 237, 243, 244.
Quarters, or provinces, the country divided into, lx.
Quarters, the names of, lxi; subdivisions, lxii.
Quarter Things (Fjórðungsþing), four to the whole island, lxii; fall into disuse, lxv; their establishment, cxiii; mentioned, clii.
Queen's place at the feast, civ.

RADBARD, father of Randver, II. 116.
Radi hæings, lxxii.
Rafn the foolish, lxxvii.
Rafn the red, a Christian, cxcvii. II. 335, 337.
Rafn, son of Kettle hæing, the Speaker of the Law, lix, lxxii; lives near Mord at Hof, lxxxi, lxxxii; his death mentioned, lxxviii. I. 44, 60. *See* Ulfjót.
Rafnkelstede, II. 202. *See* Hrafnkell.
Raforta, daughter of Kjarval the Erse king, II. 115.
Ragi, son of Olof the halt, a manslayer, I. 44.
Ragi's brother, lix. *See* Thorarin.
Ragnar hairybreeks (Ragnar Loðbrok), cxiii, cxci; son of Sigurd Ring, I. 1. II. 116, 117, 224.

Ragneida, daughter of Helga and Kari, II. 348.
Ragnhilda Gunnhillda's daughter, II. 383, 394, 397.
Ran, a sea goddess, II. 359.
Randver, son of Radbard, II. 116.
Rangriver, vales and plains, xlii, lxviii, lxxviii, lxxxvii, cxxx, cxxxix; the booth at the Althing, cxxxvi, cxxxviii; the Quarter, lxi. I. 1, 3, 20, 67, 70, 71, 97, 147, 152, 154, 179, 180, 199, 200, 203, 225, 227, 228. II. 90, 94, 131, 146, 185, 188, 209.
Rannveig, or Rannveiga, the daughter of Sigfus or Sigmund, Sighvat the red's son, Gunnar's mother, lxxiii; betrothed to Hamond Gunnar's son, lxxv, lxxvi; youngest sister of Fiddle Mord, lxxxi. I. 59; counsel to Hallgerda, 108; on Thord, 124; on Thord's slaying, 132; saying to Gunnar, 173; downcast at the slaying of Otkell's son, 229; advises Gunnar to fare abroad, 234; sleeping room, 242; saying to Gunnar, 243; rebukes Hallgerda, 246; keeps Gunnar's bill, 249; threatens Hallgerda, 249; is told of Gunnar's song in the cairn, 249; welcomes Skarphedinn, 250.
Ranveig the silly, son of Valgard, father of Jorund the priest, I. 78.
Rannveiga Mord Valgard's son's daughter, II. 127.
Rannveiga Thorgeir's daughter, II. 205.
Ranvir of Thorolfsfell, I. 80.
Rape of Bramber, in Sussex, II. 284.
Rapes, II. 284. *See* Hrepps.
Raufarfell, II. 285, 286.
Raun, II. 202. *See* Hrafnkell.
Ravensfood, xlii. II. 78.
Ravens Rift (Hrafnagjá), cxxvi; cxxxix. II. 77.
Redslips, Rauðuskriður (Stóra Dímon), lxx. I. 107. II. 52.
Ref the Skald, II. 71.
Ref, son of Skidi the old, II. 115.
Reginleif, daughter of Sæmund the South Islander, II. 115.
Religion of the Norsemen, xiii-xviii.
Republic, lv, lvii.
Reval, I. 89,
Revenge, duty of, xxix, xxx, xxxi, cxxii, clxxxviii.
Reydarmull (Reyðarmull), cxxv. II. 77.
Reydarside. *See* Thorgil, II. 117.
Reyðwater, cxxv. I. 185.
Reykdale, II. 213, 241, 273.
Reykia, II. 218.
Reykiahole, II. 70. *See* Thorgil.

Reykiardale or Reykriverdale, I. 29, 55, 67. II. 239.
Reykiavík, ii, lv, cxx, cxxxvi.
Reykium, Runolf Thorstein's son's dwelling, II. 163.
Reykjaness, ii, xxxvi. I. 40.
Rhode Island, cxvi.
Rift. *See* Great Rift or Almannagjá, cxxvi, cxxxi, cxxxvi.
Rifstángi, iv.
Rimmugýgr. *See* Ogress of War.
Rimul in Gaulardale, II. 63.
Ring, the holy, xxxviii.
Rodny Hauskuld's daughter, cxxi. I. 79; Hauskuld Njal's son's mother, 79; hears of her son's slaying at Holt, II. 91; takes the dead body to Bergthorsknoll, 91; she chooses Skarphedinn as blood avenger, 92; remains at Bergthorsknoll all night, 93; Ingialld her brother, 124; she goes to the Springs, 160; urges Ingialld to leave Flosi's band, 161; comes back to Bergthorsknoll and Holt, 162.
Rodny, mother of Eyjolf the guileful, II. 219.
Roger the white, II. 17.
Rognvald, Earl of Orkney, cxv; his expedition to the Holy Land, II. 362-370.
Rognvald, Earl of Mæren. *See* Hrodlaug and Turf-Einar, II. 11, 62.
Rome, Kári goes to, xcvii; Flosi's pilgrimage to, clxxxix; Audun goes to, clxxviii; Rafn the red offers to make a pilgrimage to, cxci, cxcviii. II. 297, 336, 346.
Romsdale, lxxvi.
Rood-cross, II. 66.
Ross, in Earl Sigurd's realms, II. 14.
Runolf of the Dale, son of Wolf Aurpriest, lxxviii; at Gunnar's wedding, I. 102; at the Dale, 168; a guest at Otkell's, 168; bids Otkell to the Dale, 169; warning to Skamkell, 171; gives Otkell gifts, 172; he rides to the Thing, 210; a friend of Thrain, II. 48; he prays him to make peace with Njal's sons, 49; tells Flosi of Hauskuld's slaying, 119; also what he thinks of Mord Valgard's son, 120; he goes to the Thing, 131; at the Courts, 146; is appealed to by Njal, 148; is one of Flosi's daysmen, 149.
Runolf's daughter, II. 115. *See* Valgerda.
Runolf, son of Naddad, I. 148.
Runolf Thorstein's son sees the "Wolf's ride," II. 163, 164.
Russia, clxxviii. I. 83, 256.
Rye grown, cx.

Sacrifices, xxxviii, xxxix, xl, lv.
Sæbol, the house at, cxxii.

Sælingdale's tongue, II. 116.
Sæmund the wise, son of Sigfus, I. 78, 80 ; preface xi.
Sæmund's Edda quoted, cix.
Sæmund the South Islander, II. 115.
Sæmundslithe, II. 115.
Sævuna, a carline at Bergthorsknoll, II. 162; her bones found after the burning, 195.
Safn til Sögu Íslands quoted, lxxv, cxxxvii.
Sailors, cxvi.
St. Columba, viii.
St. John's head, clxxi.
St. Patrick taken prisoner in Gaul, cxcii.
St. Paul, the Feast of, lv.
St. Peter, cxcviii ; the Feast of, lv.
Sam, an Eastfirther, cxxx; he outlaws Hrafnkell, spares his life, and is outwitted by Hrafnkell, clxv, clxvii.
Sam the Irish hound, given to Gunnar, lxxxviii. I. 223; slain by Aunund, 241.
Samstede, Lyting's dwelling, II. 88, 92, 97, 98.
Sanctuary, xxxviii.
Sand, II. 165, 189, 293.
Sandgil, I. 185, 186, 196.
Sandhol ferry, quarrel at, lxxii, lxxv. I. 59.
Sarkland, II. 369.
Saudafell, the house at, xcix.
Saurby, Hlenni the old's dwelling, II. 78.
Saurkvir the churl, II. 139.
Saurli Broddhelgi's son dwells at Waltheofstede, II. 201 ; refuses to commit himself to Flosi, 203 ; he is not a man of strife, 205.
Saxons, their degeneracy in England, x.
Saxony, clxxx.
Saxony, Willibald, Count of, II. 64.
Scandinavian race, xxxi ; independence, xliv, xlvi, clxxiv, cxcii.
Scarcity, times of, xlviii.
Scarf or Skarf (the cormorant), son of Hallkell, lxxix. I. 147.
Scilly, the monks of, clxxxiii, clxxxiv.
Scoradale, I. 55.
Scot king, II. 8. *See* Malcolm.
Scots, x, xi; they slay Thorstein the red, lxxx ; slay Earl Sigurd's steward, II. 13 ; in the battle with the Earls, 14.
Scotland and the Icelanders, clxxxiv. II. 7, 8, 12, 14, 327.
Scotland's Firths, cxvii. II. 12, 344, 347.
Scottish main, x, cxci.
Second sight, xxiii.
Sedgetarn, Vestein at, buried under a cairn, cxxii.
Seething-house, c.
Self-doom (sjalf-dæmi), cxli.
Selialandsmull, lxxvi. I. 61. II. 187, 189, 208, 286, 298, 307.

Selriverdale, I. 40.
Seydisfirth, v.
Sheep sacrificed, xl ; rearing, cxi ; due to the priest, cxxiv.
Sheriffs, lx.
Shetland, viii, x, xi, cxiv, clxxxiv. II. 63, 322.
Shieldburg, II. 334.
Shields and weapons, cvii.
Ships, lxxviii ; foreign, and traders, xlviii, cxvii ; their figure-heads, lviii ; their construction, cxi, cxvi, cxvii ; laid up in winter, cxviii.
Shrines, xiii.
Side (Síða), the, v. I. 151. Hall's dwelling, II. 61, 62, 64, 76, 78, 118, 131, 146, 147, 148, 151, 152, 157, 198, 200, 217, 274, 279, 280, 285, 291, 293, 321, 324, 333, 335, 336.
Sidemen, II. 311.
Sigfus, son of Sigmund, lxxiii.
Sigfus, the son of Sigvat the red, lxxv ; brother of Rannveiga and Mord, his seven sons, lxxxvi ; they are first cousins of Sigmund's brothers, lxxxvi ; the sons, cxi. I. 101; his children at Gunnar's wedding, 101,102 ; his sons ride to the Thing, 210 ; sons wroth at Gunnar's death, 248. *See* Thrain, Kettle, Thorkell, Mord, Lambi, Sigmund, Sigurd, Sæmund the wise, Rannveig.
Sigfus or Sigmund, son of Sighvat the red, father of Rannveig, slain at Sandhol ferry, I. 59.
Sigfus, the son of Lodmund and Thorgerda, father of Sæmund the wise, I. 78, 80.
Sigfus Ellidagrim's son, brother of Asgrim, I. 80.
Sigfus, sons of, II. 1, 3, 80, 88, 104, 124, 125, 144, 145, 146, 147, 150, 153, 155, 157, 165, 166, 181, 182, 185, 191, 199, 206, 214, 238, 248, 272, 285, 286, 288, 292, 293, 295, 305. *See* Thrain, Kettle of the Mark, Lambi, Thorkell, Mord, Sigmund, and Sigurd ; daughter, *see* Steinvora.
Sighvat the red, father of Sigfus, *see* Sigvat.
Sigmund Sighvat's son, his quarrel with Stein Baug's son, is slain, lxxii; his sons and daughters, lxxiii ; error concerning, in Landnáma, lxxv ; Rannveiga, his stepmother, lxxvi, lxxxi.
Sigmund Auzur's son rides with Unna to the Thing, I. 23, 24, 25.
Sigmund the white, son of Lambi, his death mentioned, lxxxvi, cvii, cxiii. I. 126 ; he and Skiolld come to Lithend, 126 ; they slay Thord, Thrain looks on, 131 ; rebuked by Gunnar, 134 ;

sings a mocking song on Njal, 137; his red dress, 142; slain by Skarphedinn, 143. II. 51.
Sigmund, father of Thorstein, and son of Bard the nip, II. 78.
Sigmund Sigfus' sixth son, I. 102; meets Flosi, II. 126; joins him, 158; is slain by Kari, 289.
Signy Otkell's daughter, I. 169.
Sigtrygg, freedman of Asgerd, drowned in Markfleet, I. 122.
Sigtrygg of the silky beard, King, from Ireland, xcvii, clxxxix, cxciv, cxcv, cxvi. II. 323; he comes to the Orkneys, 325; is in Earl Sigurd's hall, 325; he asks Flosi about the burning, 327; urges Sigurd to aid him against King Brian, 327, 328; seeks the Vikings, 328, 329; is in Brian's battle 334; he flees, 336.
Sigurd, Earl, of Orkney, son of Hlodver, a friend of Njal's sons, xc; his Yule feast, xcvi; his hall, xxxiii, cv; his body guard, clxx, clxxii; a nominal Christian convert, clxxxix; challenged by Finnleik, cxc; his Raven banner, cxci; his death, cxcvii; name mentioned, cxi, rules over the Orkneys, II. 11; takes Njal's sons into his bodyguard, 12; hears news of the Scots slaying his steward, 13; his battle 14, 15; Kari meets him, 39, 40; Flosi comes to him, 320; he takes an atonement from him and gives him peace, 321; his Yule feast, 322; King Sigtrygg begs for aid, 324; he listens to the tale of the Burning, 325; his clothes are stained with Gunnar's blood, 326; agrees to aid Sigtrygg, 327, 328; he goes to Dublin, 333; is in mid fight in Brian's battle, 334; his banner-bearers are slain; he conceals his banner under his cloak and is slain, 335; his wraith seen, it disappears under a brae in the Orkneys, 342, 343, 397.
Sigurd Earl of Hladir, II. 388, 390.
Sigurd Fafnir's-bane, I. 50.
Sigurd Hacon's son, I. 84.
Sigurd ring, the son of Randver, II. 116.
Sigurd Sigfus' seventh son, I. 102.
Sigurd snake-i'-the-eye, son of Ragnar hairybreeks, I. 1. II. 117.
Sigurd swinehead dwells by Thurso Water, I. 195; comes to Sandgil, 196; saying to Kol, 197; slain, 201.
Sigvat the red, a man of rank

and worth, of Helgeland in Norway, settles on Kettle's landnam, lxxii ; date of his arrival, lxxv, lxxxiv ; his grand-daughter Unna, lxxviii; name mentioned, lxxvi, lxxxi; father of Mord, I. 1, 59, 101, 126.
Sitting-room, xcviii.
Skagafirth, iv, cxxxi, cxxxix; Things of, lxii. II. 115, 136.
Skagi headlands, ii.
Skal, Gunnar's dwelling, II. 310.
Skalabrekka, cxxv.
Skali, or hall, xcviii, xcix, cvii.
Skallagrim. *See* Egil, iii, xxi.
Skamkell, lxxxvii ; he dwells at Hof, I. 148; gives Otkell evil counsel, 149; finds Malcolm's knife and belt in Rangriver, 154; his evil counsel at Kirkby, 154, 157, 158 ; rides to Gizur the white and Geir the priest, 160-162 ; comes to Mossfell, 161 ; his lying, 162 ; jeers Gunnar, 163 ; rides to the Thing, 164; sick, 165, 167 ; rides with Otkell, 169 ; jeers at Gunnar, 170 ; story to Runolf, 171 ; taunts reported, 172 ; slain by Gunnar, 175 ; falls unatoned, 184.
Skapta Jokul, its eruptions, v.
Skaptarfell, II. 107.
Skaptarfells-Thing, II. 123.
Skaptartongue, II. 159, 304, 306, 307.
Skaptarwater, II. 306, 307, 310, 311, 312.
Skapti Thorod's son, Bristlepoll, speaker of the law, lix ; his decisions, lviii, lix ; his booth, cxxxiv, cxxxvi, cxxxvii ; a man well skilled in law, a friend of Gizur, I. 180 ; is appealed to by Njal as to the formation of a Fifth Court, II. 83, 84 ; he brings the Fifth Court into law, 86 ; refuses aid to Njal's sons, 133 ; Skarphedinn taunts him, 134 ; he remembers this taunt, 229, 230 ; Gudmund's plan, 234 ; he is consulted by Eyjolf, 252 ; he thinks much of Thorhall's skill in law, 255 ; he is attacked and wounded by Asgrim, 276 ; aids in separating the fighters, 278 ; he taunts Kari, 279 ; he gets blood-money for his wound, 284.
Skapti, son of Oleif the broad, I. 180.
Skard, I. 73.
Skarf, son of Hallkell, lxxix. I. 147.
Skarphedinn, Bergthora's father, I. 101.
Skarphedinn Njal's son, xxvi, lxxxvi, xciv, xcv, xcvi, cvii, cxxi, clxxxvi, clxxxix. I. 78; character, 79 ; marries Thorhilda, but stays at Bergthorsknoll, 80 ; at Gunnar's wed-

ding, 102; good to Atli, 113; on Atli's slaying, 121; on Brynjolf's slaying, 125; on Thord, his foster-father's slaying, 134; at home, 136; answer to his mother's taunts, 140; avenges his family for the mocking songs, 140; slays Sigmund with his axe, the "Ogress of War," 143; sends Sigmund's head to Hallgerda, 143; wishes to drive Gunnar's horse, 190; song—his wish to fight, 192; offers assistance to Gunnar, 239; he and Hogni go to Gunnar's cairn and hear the singing, 250; offers his help in avenging Gunnar, 251; slays Starkad, 253; he and Hogni go to the Point, slays Tjorfi and Starkad, 253; song, 254; he comes to Gritwater, II. 45; retorts upon Hallgerda, 46; warns Hrapp, tells his father of the insults, 47; goes out after Thrain, 51, 52; he leaps across the fleet, 53; cleaves Thrain with "the Ogress of War," 54; he sings a song, 55; spares the lives of Gunnar and Grani, 56; he hears of his brother Hauskuld's slaying, Rodny looks to him for vengeance, goes out after Lyting and his brothers, 94; slays Hallgrim and Hallstein, 94, 95; tells Grim not to blame his father, 98; Mord makes up to him, 102, 103; he gives Hauskuld Thrain's son a horse, 104; Mord's slanders, 105, 106; he tells Mord he will slay Hauskuld if Mord has a hand in it, 109; he slays Hauskuld, 110; his saying to his father at his sorrow for Hauskuld, 111; Mord's falsehood, 112; notice of manslaughter is given at his hand, 114; he tells Njal his plans, 128; he goes with Asgrim to seek aid, 132; he taunts Skapti, 133; he taunts Snorri, 135, 136; he taunts Hafr, 136; his saying to Gudmund, 138; he is cautioned by Asgrim before entering Thorkel foulmouth's booth, 140; he taunts Thorkel, and with axe aloft, forces him to sit down, 142, 143; Gudmund hears of his punishing Thorkel, 144; he smiles scornfully at the award, 152, 153; he comes to the Court of Laws, 153, 154; his reproof to Flosi, 154; he taunts Flosi, 155; he returns to Bergthorsknoll, 160; laughs at Sævuna's prophecies, 162; he bids the men not be downcast at the portents, 167; he tells his father that Flosi will burn the house, 169; he says he will die with his father

indoors, 170 ; slays Hroald, 171 ; his saying to Flosi's band on lighting the pile, 172 ; he taunts Grani, 173 ; his wife leaves the burning house, 175 ; he hurls the brands out at the burners, 177 ; tells Kari to leap out first, 178, 179 ; he tries to follow Kari, but falls down inside, 180 ; treads the fire with Grim, is shut in by the fallen gable, 181 ; his death song, 184 ; his body found, 193, 194 ; his memory cherished by Kari, 198, and by Thorhall, 240 ; his name and deeds spoken of, 222, 270, 272, 282, 325.
Skarphedinn's wife, II. 175. *See* Thorhilda.
Skatt-gatherer, clxxiii. II. 37.
Skeggbroddi, xcix.
Skeggi, son of Hrapp, I. 80.
Skeggi of Midfirth, II. 219.
Skeggi, Master, a friend of Kari's at Thraswick, II. 327, 344, 347.
Skeggi's son. *See* Hjallti.
Skeid, Reykium on, II. 163.
Skeidará sands, v.
Skidi the old, II. 115.
Skidi's daughter, II. 116. *See* Thorgerda.
Skiolld, a Swede, Sigmund's fellow voyager, lxxxv, cvii. I. 126 ; at Thord's death, 131 ; slain by Helgi and Grim, 143.
Skjálfandafljót, vi.
Skjalfandí Bay (Quakewater), iv, vi.
Skóga, a farm of Thorgeir's brother's, II. 290.
Skógar, vi.
Skorargeir, I. 61. *See* Thorgeir Craggeir.
Skógmenn, clxvii.
Skuti (Killing), II. 221.
Skye, clxxxiv.
Smoland, I. 89. II. 2.
Snæfell (Snowfell), iii.
Snorri the priest helps to bring Christianity into the law, xci ; his speech, xci, xcii ; name mentioned, iii, xxiii, xxiv, liii, cxxxi, cxxxiv, cxxxvi, cxxxvii, cxxxviii, clxvii, clxviii ; his family booth, cxxxviii, clxxxvii ; he dwells at Helgafell, afterwards at Hvamsfirth, II. 116 ; a friend of Asgrim, 117 ; will not aid Njal's sons, but will not be against them, 134, 135 ; Skarphedinn taunts him, 135, 136 ; one of Njal's daysmen, 150 ; his heavy award and liberality, 150, 151 ; his counsel, 156 ; sees the gold ring on Eyjolf's arm, 226 ; he tells Gizur, 227 ; Asgrim goes to him for help, 230 ; his cautious counsel, 232 ; he draws his men up in array, 270 ; his question to Flosi, 275, 276 ; separates the fighters, 278 ;

his song, 280; his speech in the award in Flosi's atonement, 281; he receives gifts and honour from the suits, 284.
Snorro Sturla's son quoted, II. 388, 394, 401.
Snowcolf, a Viking, son of Moldan of Duncansby, II. 8; fights with Njal's sons, Grim thrusts him overboard, 9; he is slain by Kari, 10, 11.
Social principles, xxiv.
Sodor and Man, I. 30.
Sogn, in Norway, II. 60, 115.
Soknardale, II. 136.
Solheim, Lodmund Wolf's son's dwelling, vi. II. 119, 294.
Solmund, father of Kari, clxxiii. II. 132.
Solveiga mentioned in the Sturlunga Saga, xcix.
Solvi the son of Thorstein baresark's bane, II. 124; is thrust head downwards into his own kettle of boiling broth by Hallbjorn the strong, 277.
Solvora, II. 61.
Sorcerer Hedinn. *See* Hedinn.
Soti takes Hrut's inheritance, I. 8; flees to Denmark, 13; sails past Hrut and escapes to Norway, 16; hanged by Gudred, 17.
Soti, II. 2. *See* Hallvard.
Sound, the, I. 14. *See* Oresound.
South and East Quarters, cxxxvii.
South Islands (Suðreyar), Western Isles or Hebrides, I. 30. II. 10, 11, 39, 40, 322, 333, 342, 371, 374.
Southlanders' Quarter, lxi. II. 75.
Speaker of the Law (Lögsögumaðr), his duties and power, lvii, lviii, lix, lxxii, lxxvii, lxxxi, xci, cxxxvii, cxlviii; list of, lix. *See* Skapti and Lawman.
Spirits, belief in, by the Northmen, xviii.
Springs, Ingialld's dwelling, II. 158, 160, 165, 184, 185, 188.
Spring Things, lxv, clii. II. 283.
Stafafell, Starkad's dwelling, II. 127.
Staffell, Thorkell's dwelling, II. 66, 200.
Stamford Bridge, clxxiv.
Starkad, son of Bork the waxy-toothed-blade, borrows money of Njal at interest, cxix. I. 185; his horse, 186; advice to his sons, 187; his and Egil's sons ride to Lithend, 187; he and his sons at the horse fight, 190; they plan an attack on Gunnar, 196; eggs on his men, 201; saying to the Easterling, 204; flees, is wounded, 204; goes home, 205; at Threecorner wood, 206; wound atoned, 213; summoned, 238; comes to Hof, 240; attacks Gunnar,

241, 247; slain by Skarphedinn, 253.
Starkad, brother of Flosi, II. 61; his daughter Hildigunna, 80.
Starkad Kari's son, II. 348.
Starkad Flosi's brother's son, II. 127, 131.
Stediakoll takes away Swanlauga, II. 137.
Stein Baug's son, his quarrel with Sigmund Sigvat's son, lxxii; his dwelling near Floi, lxxiii; he is killed by Önund, lxxiii.
Stein Flosi's brother, II. 61.
Steingrimsfirth, I. 34.
Steingrimsriver, I. 40.
Steinuna buys land from Ingolf, xliv.
Steinvor, wife of Egil, I. 185; taunts Thorir, 197; beseeches Thorgrim to stay with her, and gives him Gudruna, 205.
Steinvora, Flosi's wife, daughter of Hall of the Side, II. 60, 201, 321.
Steinvora, Lyting's wife, daughter of Sigfus, II. 88.
Steinvora, the mother of Ref the skald, a heathen woman opposes Thangbrand, II. 71-73.
Stocksound (Stockholm), I. 14.
Stofa or sitting-room, xcix.
Stone of sacrifice, xxxviii.
Stóra Dímon. *See* Redslips, lxx.
Storehouses, cx.
Storlek, I. 185.
Storolf Heing, or Kettle Hæng's son, xxi. I. 60; brother of Rafn, Speaker of the Law, and father of Orm the strong, 60.
Storolfsfield, xxi.
Strandarflói, iv.
Strangers, fines on the death or manslaughter of, cxxiv.
Straumey, II. 13, 15.
Straumfirthers, cxxxix.
Stroma, or Straumey, II. 13.
Sturlúnga Saga quoted, xcix, c, cxiv, cxxxviii; preface xii.
Sturlúngs acquire the Hlaðbooth, cxxxviii; their genealogy in the Landnám, cxxxix.
Succession dues, cxxiv.
Sulafells, I. 55.
Superstitions of the Northmen, xviii, xxxv, lviii.
Súr, father of Thordísa, II. 117. *See* Gísli, iii.
Surt Asbjorn's son, II. 67, 118, 149.
Sutherland, II. 14.
Svarfdæla Saga, clxx.
Sveinbjorn Egilsson referred to, cxcvi.
Sverting's son, Grim, Speaker of the Law, lix, cxxxvi.
Swan, Hallgerda's mother's brother, a wizard, dwells at Bearfirth; at the wedding, I. 34; dwells at Swanshol, 39; his incantations, 40, 41; driven ashore and lost, 51; his son Brynjolf, 118.
Swanlauga, II. 137, 322.
Swanshol, I. 42.

Swan-maiden, cxcvi.
Swart Njal's house carle goes to Redslip, I. 108; slain by Kol, 109.
Swart's slaying, lxxxv.
Swede king, II. 6.
Sweden, civ, clxxx. I. 89. II. 139, 142.
Swertingsstede, west of Markfleet, lxxvii.
Sweyn Asleif's son of Gairsay, I. 370, 376.
Sweyn Earl Hacon's son, xxxiii, intercedes for Njal's sons, II. 31, 32, 34, 36.
Sweyn Wolf son (King of Denmark), clxxiv, clxxxii.
Sweyn forkbeard, Harold Gorm's son, the Dane king, I. 256. II. 354, 357.
Swine sacrificed, xl.
Swinefell, Flosi's abode, v, xcii, cxcv; II. 61, 66, 81, 107, 155, 164, 192, 206, 285, 291, 296, 302, 310, 315, 342, 346, 347.
Swinehorndale, II. 206.

Tacitus quoted, xliv.
Takt, Brian's son, II. 323, 337.
Tann. *See* Takt, II. 323.
Tapestry, cvi.
Tegnèr's, Frithiofs, Saga quoted, II. 354, 357, 358, 360.
Teigr, lxix.
Teit, son of Kettlebjörn the the old, lxxix. *See* Kettlebjörn and Gizur; I. 80, 146; mother, Helga, 146.
Temples, xxxvii, xxxviii, xlvi, xlviii, xlix, lviii, lix, lxiv, lxxi, cxv, cxxiv.
Thames, clv.
Thangbrand, the son of Willibald, Count of Saxony, sent to Iceland by King Olaf to preach Christianity, xc, xci, xcii. II. 64; he sings mass at Thvattwater, and baptises Hall of the Side, 65; goes across Lonsheath to Staffell, thence to Hornfirth at Borgarhaven Swinefell, makes converts, 66; thence west to Woodcombe and to Headbrink—Hedinn, by sorcery, makes the earth swallow his horse, 67; his companion Gudleif slays Hedinn; he fares to Dyrholms—makes converts; to Fleetlithe, Weatherlid, the skald, opposes the faith; he slays him, 68; to Bergthorsknoll, and makes converts, 68; thence to Hawkdale, to Grimsness, Thorwald opposes him, 69; Thorwald is slain, 70, 71; he rides to the Thing, thence to the west country, Steinvora opposes him, 71; her questions; he answers her, 72; he goes to Bardastrand, he is at a feast at Gest Oddleif's son's, 73; he meets a Baresark; he proves his faith to be the better, 74; he slays the

Baresark, makes many converts, is warned not to go farther west, 75 ; returns to Bergthorsknoll, thence to Alftafirth, 75, 76 ; fares abroad with Gudleif, comes to Norway, and tells Olaf of his mission, 76 ; rebuked by Olaf, 361.
Theodorick the monk cited, II. 395.
Thidrandi Hall of the Side's son, account of his death, xx. II. 62.
Thidrandi of Verudale, II. 62.
Thidrandi the wise, the son of Kettle rumble, II. 62, 203.
Thidrandi. *See* Thorir, II. 205.
Thietmar of Merseburg quoted, cxc.
Thile, vii, viii.
Thing, great, its situation settled, liii.
Thing, contempt of, clvii.
Things or meetings, li. *See* Althing.
Things, local, lv ; local suits at the nearest, lxi; three local to each Quarter Thing, lxii ; four Quarters to the whole island, lxi ; every freeman bound to be present, cxxiii.
Thingbrekka, or Hill of Laws, at the Spring Things, where notices and proclamations were made, lxv.
Thingfield or Thingvalla, description of, cxxv-cxxxix, clxxxv, clxxxviii. II. 131, 264.
Thingskala Thing, I. 211, 216. II. 98, 101.
Thingvalla or Thingfield, description of, cxxv-cxxxix.
Thingvalla lake, liii, cxxv.
Thingvalla "toun," cxxxvi.
Thingvallastede, cxxxvi.
Thiorsá, the (Thursowater), lxix.
Thiostar's son. *See* Thormod, lxxiv.
Thiostolf, lxxxiii, lxxxiv ; the south islander, Hallgerda's foster-father, clxxxvii. I. 30 ; comforts Hallgerda, 33 ; visits Swan, 34 ; at Middlefells strand, 35 ; slays Thorwald, 37 ; escapes, 38 ; flees to Swan, 39, 40 ; forbidden to go home with Hallgerda to Varmalek, 47 ; at Hallgerda's second wedding, 50 ; driven away from Hauskuldstede, 52 ; comes to Varmalek—is made welcome, 52 ; refuses to look for Glum's sheep, 54 ; follows Glum and slays him, 55, 56 ; slain by Hrut, 58 ; he is spoken of, 119.
Thiostolf, son of Biorn Gullbera of Reykriverdale, I. 5 ; dwells at Lund; children's play, 29.
Thistlefirth, iv.
"Thjódolfr," cxxxv.
Thjostar's sons, xviii.
Thomas' Ancient Exchequer of England cited, II. 403.

Thomsen Grímur, preface xvii.
Thor, xvii, xxv, xxxvi, xli, clxxxviii. II. 72.
Thor's car, II. 24; hammer, cxci.
Thora Ingialld's mother, I. 1.
Thora, daughter of Sigurd snake-eye, II. 117.
Thorarin, Ragi's brother, son of Olof the Halt; Speaker of the Law, lix, cxli; dwells at Varmalek; Speaker of the Law, I. 44; rides with Glum to Hauskuldstede, 45, 46, 48, 49; lives at Varmalek with Glum, 50; gives up Varmalek to Glum; lives at Laugarness, 50; refuses to change lands with Glum, 51; blames Glum for Thiostolf's stay, 53; receives gifts of atonement for Glum's slaying, 58, 59; changes dwellings with Hallgerda, 59.
Thorbjorn the old, an East-firther, cxxx.
Thorbjorn, one of Mord's witnesses, II. 242, 243.
Thorbrand Thorleik's son, I. 238; cuts Gunnar's bow-string, 244; is slain, 245.
Thorbrand, the son of Asbrand, II. 299, 314. *See* Asbrand and Vebrand.
Thord Freedmanson sees his own fetch, xix, xxxiv; son of Sigtrygg, I. 122; at Bergthorsknoll; fosters Njal's sons, 123; sets his heart on Gudfinna, 123; goes to Lithend, 123; slays Brynjolf, 124; "fey," 128; goes east under Eyjafell, 129; to Thorolfsfell, 130; slain, 131; slaying mentioned, II. 52; his bones found after the burning, 195.
Thord Freyspriest, the son of Auzur, and father of Flosi and Starkad, II. 60, 80, 124; his slaying mentioned, 123.
Thord Gellir, a great chief, proposes reforms at the Althing, lxi, lxiv, cxxxviii; father of Eyjolf the guileful, II. 219.
Thord Gudmund's son's booth, cxxxvi.
Thord of the Head, son of Bjorn butter-carrier, II. 115, 116.
Thord Illugi's son of Maura-tongue, II. 158.
Thord, Kari and Helga's son, fostered by Njal, II. 108; he will not leave his grandmother, 176, 177; is burned in the house, 181; his body found, 193; name mentioned, 283, 348.
Thord, Kari and Hildigunna's son, II. 348.
Thord longbeard, Hrapp's son, I. 147.
Thord Skeggi, xxxvi, lxxviii. I. 80.
Thord's son (or Thord Freyspriest's sons). *See* Flosi,

Starkad, Thorgeir, Stein, Kolbein, and Egil.
Thord's daughter, II. 116. *See* Herdísa.
Thordísa, mother of Snorri the priest, heiress of the last Gudlaugr, cxxxix. II. 117.
Thordísa's husband slain by Gísli, ciii.
Thordísa, mother of Hall of the Side, II. 62.
Thordísa, Gudmund's daughter, Saurli's wife, II. 203.
Thorfinn the skull-splitter, cxci. II. 11, 383.
Thorfinna, Njal's kinswoman, beguiled by Thorgeir Otkell's son, I. 206.
Thorgeir, the priest of Lightwater, Speaker of the Law, lix; his power at the change of faith, lviii, xci, xcii, cxxxv; his booth, cxxxvii; son of Tjorfi, son of Thorkel the long; his pedigree, II. 77, 78; and the old Speaker of the Law; is chosen by Hall to judge between the Christians and the heathens, 79; he declares in favour of Christianity; he utters the law regarding the Lord's-day and fast-days, etc., 79; his son Thorkel foulmouth, 138.
Thorgeir Gollnir or Gelling, son of Thorolf, settles at Bergthorsknoll, lxxvii. I. 61; father of Njal, II. 183.
Thorgeir of Hordaland, husband of Asgerda, lxxvi; father of Holt Thorir, lxxvii.
Thorgeir Craggeir, or Skorageir, son of Holt Thorir, xxxiv; his ancestors, lxxvii, xcvi, clxxxvii; otherwise Skorargeir, I, 61; he is called Njal's brother's son, II. 62; at the Thing, 146; he hears of Njal's burning, 189; he has the blood feud after Njal, and tells Kari he will stand by him at the Althing, 190, 191; he receives from Kari the "Ogress of War," 194; Kari relies on his aid, 196; Gizur tells Kari to ride to him, 208; he goes with Kari to Mord's, 209; he makes over the suit to Mord, 209-212; he rides home, 213; Flosi mistaken for him, 215; he rides to the Thing with much people, 218; advises with Asgrim, 227; seeks aid, 228.; he gives notice of a suit against Glum, 237; Mord tells of his making over the suit, 243, 245, 246; he is at the Thing battle; he attacks Hallbjorn, and slays Thorwald with the Ogress of War, 272; drives off the field Holmstein and Thorkel Geiti's son, 273;

he points out Eyjolf to Kari, 278 ; refuses to take atonement, 279 ; stands by Kari, and goes with him, 281 ; they ride across Markfleet, 386 ; they pursue the sons of Sigfus, 286, 287 ; he slays Thorkel Sigfus' son, 288 ; slays Leidolf, 290 ; gets great fame, 291 ; takes atonement for Flosi, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297 ; takes care of Kari's family and goods, 298 ; takes Bjorn under his safe guard, 317.

Thorgeir Otkell's son slain by Gunnar, lxxxviii. I. 148; his character, 214; evil counsel of Starkad's son ; unwilling to break the peace, 216, 217 ; comes to Threecorner, 218 ; counselled to beguile Ormilda, 224, 225 ; slain by Gunnar, 228.

Thorgeir Starkad's son, l. 185 ; foul play, 191 ; maims Gunnar's horse, 191 ; will not make peace, 192 ; saying to Hildigunna, 196 ; tells Gunnar his vow, 202 ; flees home wounded, 204 ; beguiles Thorfinna, 206 ; goes to Valgard and Mord, 207 ; received the first blow, 207 ; goes to Aunund, 209 ; commences a suit against Gunnar, 209 ; to be summoned for seduction, 209 ; brothers atoned, 213 ; his wound atoned, 213 ; goes to Mord, 214 ; tells his father of Mord's treacherous counsel, 215 ; evil counsel to Otkell's son, 216, 217 ; goes to Kirkby, urges Thorgeir to fall upon Gunnar, 217 ; meets his namesake at Threecorner ridge, 218 ; his band fall asleep, 218 ; frightened by Njal, they gallop home, 220 ; angry with Mord, 225 ; plots with Mord, 225 ; reproaches his namesake, 227 ; flees, 228 ; summoned, 238 ; at Gunnar's slaying, 248 ; fear for the sons of Sigfus, 248 ; boasts of the wound he gave Gunnar, 248; slain by Hogni, 253.

Thorgeir Thord Freyspriest's son, Flosi's brother, II. 61, 239, 258.

Thorgeir, the son of Eric of Gooddale. *See* Thorkel, II. 205.

Thorgeir's ford, I. 228.

Thorgerda, daughter of Sigmund, marries Önund the little, lxxiii ; and urges him to avenge her father, lxxiii ; sister of Mord, lxxxi.

Thorgerda, daughter of Kettlebjörn, lxxix.

Thorgerda, daughter of Aud and Thorstein the red, marries Kolli, and goes to Norway after his death, and mar-

ries Herjolf; her sons, Hrut and Hauskuld, lxxx. I. 1.
Thorgerda Shrinebride, daughter of King Haleyg, of Helgeland, the divinity of Earl Hacon, xxxix. II. 24, 115.
Thorgerda, mother of Sigfus, I. 80.
Thorgerda, wife of Otkell, daughter of Mar, I. 148.
Thorgerda Glum and Hallgerda's daughter, at her mother's marriage, I. 103; marries Thrain, 103; takes to housekeeping at Gritwater, 105; gives birth to a boy, Hauskuld, 189. II. 48; her reply to Kettle as to fostering Hauskuld, 58; receives notice of his slaying, 111; reminds Kettle of his promise, 113.
Thorgerda Helga's daughter, II. 348.
Thorgerda Njal's daughter at Gunnar's wedding, I. 102. Kettle of the Mark's wife, II. 48; with her father in the burning house; leaves it, 175.
Thorgerda Skidi's daughter, II. 116.
Thorgil of Reykiahole, II. 70.
Thorgil, the son of Thorstein the white, II. 204.
Thorgil Reydarside, father of Thorstein codcatcher, II. 117.
Thorgils, a great lawyer, clxviii.
Thorgils Scarleg's foster-child, II. 390.
Thorgrim, Thordisa's husband, a neighbour of Asgerda's, cviii; at the burial of Vestein, cxxii, cxxiii; slain by Gisli, cii, ciii.
Thorgrim the tall or the big, I. 61; son of Holt-Thorir, II. 62; rides with his brother to the Thing, 129; goes with Njal's sons to seek friends, 132; at the Court, 146; rides with his brothers to the Thing, 208, 218; declares a suit against Modolf, 238; is atoned with Flosi, 281.
Thorgrim the Easterling, I. 186; at Sandgil, 197; marries Gudruna, Thorir's widow, 205; summoned to attack Lithend, 238; slain by Gunnar, 242.
Thorgrim, father of Snorri the priest, II. 116, 117.
Thorgrim the showy, the son of Thorkel the fair, II. 118.
Thorgrim, the son of Kettle the fat, slays Halli the red, II. 148.
Thorhall, the name of two sons of Asgrim, I. 80; one fostered and taught law by Njal, 82; the third greatest lawyer in Iceland, II. 108; rides with Njal to the Thing, 128; his russet coat, 129; he seeks friends for Njal's

sons, 132 ; his legal advice in the suit on Hauskuld's slaying, 145, 147 ; his love for Njal and his sons ; he swoons on hearing the news of Njal's burning, 195 ; he rides to see Gizur, 207 ; hurts his leg ; is lame, 213 ; rides to the Thing, 214 ; he is unable to leave his booth ; his able advice to Mord in conducting the suit, 240, 249, 250, 251, 253, 254, 260, 270 ; he rises from his bed, and slays Grim the red, 271 ; makes an onslaught on Flosi's band, 272, 274, 276.

Thorhalla, Asgrim's daughter, lxxxvi. I. 80 ; marries Helgi Njal's son, 82 ; at Gunnar's wedding, 102, 103 ; (Thorkatla in text) sits between the brides Hallgerda and Thorgerda, 105 ; leaves the burning house, II. 174 ; returns home, 195.

Thorhalla, daughter of Kettle-björn the old, lxxix.

Thorhilda skaldtongue, Thrain's wife, cxv ; bidden to Gunnar's wedding, I. 101 ; waits at Gunnar's wedding, 103 ; her jealousy, 103.

Thorhilda, daughter of Ranvir of Thorolfsfell, marries Skarphedinn, I. 80 ; shepherd discovers Thorgeir's band, 219 ; she leaves the burning house, II. 175.

Thorir cropbeard, liii.

Thorir, a Norseman, sails with Audun, clxxiv.

Thorir, Earl, I. 84.

Thorir, or Holt-Thorir, son of Asgerda, his sons' names, I. 61 ; at Gunnar's wedding ; his sons at Gunnar's wedding, 103 ; his slaying spoken of, 185 ; his sons, II. 62. *See* Thorgeir, Thorleif, and Thorgrim.

Thorir an Easterling at Sandgil, I. 186 ; reply to Egil, 197 ; Steinvora's taunts, joins Egil's band, 197 ; slays Hjort, is slain by Gunnar, 204 ; atonement, 213.

Thorir of Espihole, II. 61.

Thorir, son of Helgi, makes mocking songs on Gudmund, II. 138, 139.

Thorir, son of Thord Illugi's son, one of Flosi's band, II. 158.

Thorir, father of Hrafnkell, II. 202.

Thorir, son of Porridge-Alti, II. 205.

Thorir Thidrandi, II. 203-205.

Thorir tag, II. 139.

Thorir's son. *See* Thorgeir Craggeir.

Thorkatla, mother of Thorhalla, lxxxvi.

Thorkatla Gizur the white's daughter, wife of Mord, lxxxix ; asked in marriage by Mord, I. 208 ; goes home

to Mossfell, 208. II. 128; Gizur threatens to take her home, 208; she is quite willing to come, 209.
Thorkatla, the grand-daughter of Snorri the priest, cxxxix.
Thorkatla Geir's mother, I. 147; a daughter of Kettle-björn the old of Mossfell, 147.
Thorkel the black, of Hleid-rargarth, II. 78.
Thorkel Eric of Gooddale's son, II. 136.
Thorkel foulmouth, son of Thorgeir the priest, xxvi, cvi. II. 138; his famous deeds in strange lands, 139, 140; will not aid Njal's sons, 141; he is taunted by Skarphedinn, 142; and subdued, 143; he has mocked Gudmund, 144.
Thorkel the allwise, II. 203; asks why his mother weeps; joins Flosi, 204.
Thorkel the wise, II. 203.
Thorkel the fair, II. 118.
Thorkel Geiti's son, afraid of Flosi, II. 205; knows something of law, 220, 221; goes to the Lawman, 255; defeated at the Thing battle, 274, 277.
Thorkel the long, II. 77, 138.
Thorkel's son. *See* Eyvind.
Thorkell of the lock, clxv.
Thorkell Máni, Speaker of the Law, lix.
Thorkell Súr's son, his idleness, his evesdropping, cviii, cix, cxiii.
Thorkell clubfoot, I. 185.
Thorkell Sigfus' third son, I. 101, 102; he joins Flosi, II. 125; at the burning, 158; slain by Thorgeir, 288, 289.
Thorkell Starkad's son, I. 185; slain by Gunnar, 202.
Thorkell Gunnar's neighbour seized, I. 241; entices the hound Sam from Lithend, 241; torn by the hound, 241.
Thorkell the skald of Göta-Elf's verses on Gunnar's defence, I. 246.
Thorkell of Staffell speaks against Christianity; challenges Thangbrand; is slain, II. 66.
Thorkettle, the father of Askel, II. 239.
Thorlauga, daughter of Rafn the Speaker, wife of Jorund the priest, lxxvii.
Thorlauga, Gudmund's wife, a daughter of Thord of the Head, II. 115.
Thorleif the wise, lii.
Thorleif flash, Orn's brother, lxxiv.
Thorleif crow, son of Holt Thorir, I. 61. II. 62; joins his kinsman in riding to the Thing, 129; in Asgrim's hall, 130; he aids Njal's sons in seeking friends,

132 ; goes to the Courts ; Kari is to go to him, 208 ; he rides to the Thing with Thorgeir, 218 ; he declares his suit against the sons of Sigfus, 238 ; takes atonement from Flosi, 281.

Thorleif, son of Holmstein, hinders the missionary Thangbrand, II. 64.

Thorleik Hauskuld's son at Gunnar's wedding, I. 102 ; summoned to attack Lithend, 238.

Thormod Thiostar's son a famous bowman, lxxiv.

Thormod Skapti's son, I. 180.

Thormod Olaf's son, verses on Gunnar's defence, I. 247.

Thormóð, c.

Thorod the priest, his homestead threatened by a stream of lava, xci ; a friend of Gizur, I. 180 ; recommends an atonement between Geir and Gunnar, 183.

Thorod. *See* Skapti, lix, cxxxvi.

Thorodd, one of Mord's witnesses, II. 242, 243, 244.

Thoroddhelm, II. 115.

Thorold, son of Asgerda, lxxvi.

Thorolf, father of Thorgeir Gelling, I. 61 ; his daughter Gudfinna, 123.

Thorolf butter, the son of Thorstein the unstable, II. 115.

Thorolf, nicknamed Hellblade or Rakehell, xxxix.

Thorolf Hooknose, son of Thrand, I. 78.

Thorolf Lopt's son bears Skapti abroad, II. 134, 229.

Thorolf Mostrarskegg, xxxvi. *See* Hallstein. II. 117.

Thorolfsfell, a homestead of Njal's, I. 61, 80, 119, 150, 218.

Thorskafirth men, their booths at the Althing, cxxx, cxxxi ; priest of, clxv.

Thorsmark, II. 298, 304.

Thorstein, brother of Grettir, xxx.

Thorstein Baudvar's son, II. 62.

Thorstein baresarks-bane, II. 124.

Thorstein broadpaunch, brother of Hall of the Side, II. 157.

Thorstein codcatcher, II. 117.

Thorstein Flosi's brother's son, Kolbein's son, II. 186 ; slain by Ingialld, 187, 189.

Thorstein gapemouth, the son of Skapti, marries Gudmund's daughter, II. 234 ; in the battle at the Althing, 276.

Thorstein Hlenni's son at the battle of the Thing, II. 277.

Thorstein Hall of the Side's son, clxxvi, cxci, cxciii. II. 62 ; one of Earl Sigurd's body guard ; he intercedes for Flosi, 321 ; at Earl Sigurd's feast, goes with the Earl to Ireland, 333 ; at Brian's battle, 335 ; Ker-

thealfad grants him peace, 336, 343.
Thorstein Highbankauk, II. 68.
Thorstein the fair, II. 157.
Thorstein the red slain by the Scots, lxxx. I. 1. II. 117.
Thorstein titling, the son of Gerleif, I. 185. II. 61, 124.
Thorstein Gerleif's son, suit declared against him, II. 238; attacks Kari, is slain by him, 309, 310.
Thorstein, the son of Kettle the foolish, II. 67.
Thorstein, the son of Sigmund, II. 77, 138.
Thorstein the unstable, the son of Grim with the tuft, II. 115.
Thorstein the white, son of Oliver, II. 204.
Thorstein's son. *See* Kol; *see* Runolf.
Thoruna daughter of Thorstein the son of Sigmund, mother of Thorgeir of Lightwater, II. 77, 138.
Thoruna the horned, daughter of Kettle flatnose, II. 115.
Thoruna, daughter of Asbjorn baldpate of Myrka, Hafr's mother, II. 136.
Thorvor Thorod's mother, I. 180.
Thorwald, Hallgerda's husband, his fate mentioned, lxxxiii.
Thorwald Kodran's son a Viking, II. 354-357.
Thorwald the scurvy, brother of Biartey, I. 248; opposes Thangbrand, II. 69; lies in wait for the missionaries, 70; he is slain at Hestbeck in Grimsness by Thangbrand, xci. II. 71.
Thorwald Oswif's son dwells at Middlefells Strand, character, I. 31; woos Hallgerda, 31; warned, 32; wedding, 34; wedded life, 35-37; slain by Thiostolf, 37; his mates, 38, 40; atonement, 43.
Thorwald, son of Hall of the Side, II. 62.
Thorwalld cropbeard at Njal's burning, liii; slain at the battle at the Althing, II. 275.
Thorwalld, the son of Kettle rumble, II. 203; he agrees to stand by Flosi, 204; slain by Thorgeir, 272.
Thorwalld, Tjorfi's son, wounded by Halldor, II. 274.
Thrain Sigfus' son, xc, xcii, ci, cxv, cxix, cxli, clvi, clxxii, clxxxvi, clxxxvii; dwells at Gritwater; bidden to Gunnar's wedding, I. 101, 102; attracted by Thorgerda, 103; anger; puts away his wife, 103; asks Hauskuld for Thorgerda Hallgerda's daughter, to wife, 104; at Lithend, 129; stands by at Thord's death, 131; goes with Gunnar to Kirkby; counsel to Gunnar, 149; rides with Gunnar to Kirkby, 157; Hauskuld born, 189;

fares abroad, 235 ; goes to Norway ; Earl Hacon welcomes him for Gunnar of Lithend's sake, II. 1 ; he undertakes to slay Kol the Earl's outlaw, 3 ; comes upon Kol, 4 ; slays him, he receives gifts from the Earl, 5 ; hears of Gunnar's death, 6 ; he comes from Norway, 23 ; he is at Hlada, Hrapp flies to him for safety, 26 ; he conceals him in two casks, 28 ; denies knowledge of Hrapp to the Earl, 28, 29 ; conceals him in the hold, 30 ; he bids the Earl seek for him, 31 ; he conceals him in the sail, 32 ; the Earl's wrathful saying to him, he stands out to sea, returns to Iceland, 33 ; gives the vulture to Mord the reckless, 34 ; he has Hrapp always at Gritwater, 41 ; refuses to make atonement to Njal's sons, 42, 43 ; his reception of Njal's sons at Gritwater, 44-46 ; he goes to the Dale, 48 ; refuses to make peace with Njal's sons, 49, 50 ; he comes home as far as Markfleet, 52 ; is slain by Skarphedinn, 53, 54 ; his slaying spoken of, 57, 89, 90, 126, 140, 180, 142. *See* Thorgerda and Hauskuld.

Thrain's sister, II. 88. *See* Steinvora.

Thrand the old, son of Harold Hilditann, I. 78.

Thrand Gudbrand's son lies in wait for Hrapp, II. 24 ; is wounded by Hrapp, 24, 25 ; he dies, 26.

Thrandargil, I. 5.

Trandil, father of Gauk, I. 80.

Thraslauga, daughter of Egil Ingialld's wife, II. 124.

Thraslauga, daughter of Thorstein titling, the mother of Egil, II. 61, 124.

Thraswick, II. 13, 327, 347.

Threecorner, Threecorner-fell, Threecorner ridge, (Þríhyrníngr), ii, lxix, lxxxviii, cxix. I. 185, 196, 206, 210, 216, 218, 221, 238. II. 159, 165, 166, 187, 189.

Thurida, daughter of Kettlebjörn the old, lxxix.

Thursowater (Þjórsá), vi, xlii, lxviii, lxix, lxxiii, lxxvii, lxxviii. I. 81, 195, 198. II. 129, 188, 192, 214, 284.

Thurso-dale, II. 188.

Thvattwater (Dipwater), Hall of the Side's dwelling, xc, cxcv. II. 64, 65, 200, 206, 342.

Thverá (crosswater), Einar's dwelling, lxviii, lxix, lxx, lxxi. II. 144, 146, 148, 150.

Timber, how transported, cxviii.

Tindafell Jokul, lxx.

Tjorfi slain, I. 253.

Tjorfi, son of Thorkel the long, II. 77, 138.

Tjorfi's son, of Lightwater. *See* Thorwalld, II. 274.
Tjorvi, Thrain's serving-man's brother, II. 44; goes with Thrain to the Dale, 48; tries to trip up Skarphedinn at Thrain's slaying, 54; he is slain by Kari, 55.
Toasts (sacred), at the feasts, xli.
Tofi, a Dansk man, meets Gunnar, I. 89; Gunnar brings him to Denmark, 93; leads Gunnar to the sea rovers' hidden treasures on Osel, 92.
Tofi, an outlaw, shelters Hrapp. II. 22.
Tongue, Ellidagrim lives at, lxxix, lxxxviii, cv, cxxv, cxxxix. I. 61, 81, 194, 198, 199. II. 128, 195, 213, 214, 317.
Tongues, the, taken by Kettlebjörn the old, lxxviii.
Tönsberg, I. 84.
Trials, xlviii; before the Quarter Court, cxl; popular opinion expressed at, cxlvi; procedure at, cxlvii.
Trotternish in Skye, clxxxiv.
Tryggvi, a grandson of Harold fair, II. 388, 390.
Tryggvi's son. *See* Olaf.
Turf-Einar, son of Rognvald, Earl of Mæren, II. 11.
Turnbull's Calendar of State Papers quoted, II. 377.
"Twilight of the gods," xvi.
Týr, xvii.
Tyrfing of Beriauess, I. 207.
Tyrfing's suit settled by Egil's slaying, I. 213.

UDALLER, or freeholder, xii.
Uggi's son, II. 69. *See* Wolf.
Uist, clxxxiv, cxci.
Ulfhedinn slain, I. 201.
Ulfljót of the royal house of Norway, lii; the first Speaker of the Law, liii, lvi, lix, cliii; his code, liv, lviii, lxxxii, cliii.
Uni the unborn, *i.e.*, the disowned or the posthumous, Gardar's son, I. 61.
Unna Mord's daughter, lxxviii, lxxx, lxxxii, lxxxiii, lxxxiv, cxix, cxx, cxlv. I. 1; is wooed by Hrut, 3-5; betrothed, 5; waits three winters, 7; wedding, 20, 21; home coming, 21; unhappiness, 21, 22; rides with Hrut to the Thing, 22; repents her marriage, 22; complains to Mord, 24, 25; separates from Hrut, 25; form of separation, 26; returns to her father's house, 27; inherits all her father's goods, very lavish, 59; has squandered her goods, 62; goes to Gunnar, her kinsman, 62; begs his help to recover her dower from Hrut, 63, 64; her dower referred to, 68, 71, 72; gets back her dower

through Gunnar, 77; marries Valgard the Guileful, 78; has a son named Mord, 78; dead, 147.
Unna or Aud. *See* Aud the deeply wealthy.

VALBJORG Valgerda's mother, II. 115.
Vale country, lxxxii.
Vale, Temple of Mord Valgard's sons, xciv.
Valgard, son of Æfar, I. 78.
Valgard the guileful, son of Jorund the priest, lxxviii, lxxxviii, xciv, xcv, clx; dwells at Hof Rangriver, I. 78; woos Unna and marries her, 78; at Gunnar's wedding, 102; abroad, 147; returns to Iceland, 207; counsel to Thorgeir, 208; fares abroad, 208; summoned to attack Lithend, 238; he opposes the Christian missionaries, II. 68; he comes back to Iceland, 100; reproaches his son, 101; his evil counsels, 101, 102; he will not be a Christian; breaks the cross and all holy tokens; dies, 102. *See* Mord.
Valgerda, Runolf and Valbjorg's daughter, II. 115; Thorbrand's daughter, Bjorn the white, 299.
Valgerda Helga's daughter, II. 348.
Valhalla, xvii, xviii, cxxii. I. 252. II. 25, 69.
Valkyries, xxvii, cix, cxiv, cxcvi.
Vandil and Karli, sons of Sjolf the old of Gothland, I. 86; attack Gunnar, 87; killed by Gunnar, 88.
Varmalek, Thorarin and Glum's dwelling, I. 44, 50.
Vatna Jökul, v, vi.
Vatndales Saga quoted, xxxix.
Vatternishein in Skye, clxxxiv.
Vebrand Hamond's son, II. 126; Vebrand, the son of Thorbrand, 314.
Vemund Wordstopper, son of Thorolf Hooknose, I. 78.
Vernal Thing, lxii; its constitution, lxv, lxvi.
Verudale, Thidrandi's dwelling, II. 62.
Vestein, brother of Aud, cviii; is slain, cix; is laid in a cairn, cxxii, cxxiii.
Vestmanna Eyjar, Westmen's or Irishmen's Islands, i.
Vigfússon Guðbrandr quoted, lxxv, lxxvi. II. 354, 384, 398, 410; preface, vi, xii, xviii.
Viking-Kari, father of Baudvar, I. 80, 147.
Vikings of Jomsborg, xxxix, xlii.
Vikings, clxxxiv, cxci, cxciv. II. 7, 8, 9, 328, 343, 351-377.
Vineland (Vínland) discovered

by the Icelanders, known to have been America, cxvi.
Virki's booth, cxxxi.
Volcanic eruption (1860), vi, lv, xci.

Wager of battle, xxvii, xxviii, xxix, cliii, clv, clviii.
Wainscot pannel (þili), cii.
Wales, xcvii, clxxxiv. II. 39, 62, 343, 344, 347.
Waltheofstede, Saurli's dwelling, II. 203.
Waterfirth-men, their booths at the Althing, cxxxi. II. 278.
Waterford, cxcii.
Weaponfirth, iv; booth at the Althing, cxxxiv. II. 17, 201, 204, 205, 213.
Weatherlid the skáld slain by Thangbrand, xci. I. 255. II. 68.
Western lands, x, clxxiii.
West Firths, iii, cxvi, cxviii; the booths at the Althing, cxxxi, cxxxiv, cxxxviii. I. 21.
Westfirthers' Quarter, lxi, cxxxix. II. 221.
Westmen's Isles, i.
Wexford, cxcii.
Whiteness booths, xcv.
Whiteness priest. *See* Hauskuld.
Whitewaters, vi.
Whithorn or Whitherne in Scotland, II. 345.
William, Duke of Normandy, clxxxii.
Willibald, Count of Saxony *See* Thangbrand, II. 64.
Wives, xxvi, cxix, cxxi.
Woden, II. 69.
Wolf Aurpriest, son of Jorund the priest, lxxviii; brother of Valgard the guileful, father of Swart, father of Runolf of the Dale, sees Unna, I. 78, 168; at Gunnar's wedding, 102; warns Gizur and Geir, 165. *See* Runolf, II. 48.
Wolf the unwashed goes with Hrut, I. 13; the fight in the Sound, 14, 15; slain by Atli, 16.
Wolf Uggi's son challenged by Gunnar, pays Asgrim the money, I. 193; sings a song in answer to Thorwald the scurvy's message, II. 69, 70.
Wolf squint-eye, son of Hogni the white, II. 64.
Wolf the quarrelsome, King Brian's brother, cxciii. II. 323; in Brian's battle, 334; attacks Brodir the Viking, slays Brodir, II. 337.
Wolf's Ride (Gandreið), seen by Runolf, Thorstein's son, II. 164.
Wolf's son. *See* Lodmund, II. 119.
Women's work, cxiv.
Woodcombe, II. 67, 165, 304, 310.
Wood-dwellers, I. 61. II. 62.

Woods in Iceland, cxi.
Woof of War, cix, cxiv, cxcvi. II. 338.
Wool carding, cxiv.
Worm wallet-back, father of Hlenni the old of Saurby, II. 78.
Worm, Midgard's, xvii.
Worsaae cited, II. 397.
Worship of the elements, xiv, xxxvii.
Wraiths, xviii.

YNGVILLDA, daughter of Thorkel the wise, II. 203; her dream, 204.
Yule (Yuletide), lxxiii, cxv. II. 80, 192, 200, 322, 324.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

VOL. I.

Introduction, p. x. "The lions of the Acropolis." This is incorrect. The lion on which a runic inscription is carved stood in the Piræus, not on the Acropolis. When the Venetians, under Francesco Morosini, took Athens in the year 1687, this lion, which is of colossal size, was carried away as a trophy; it now stands at the entrance to the Arsenal at Venice. The runes on it, which were first discovered by Åkerblad, a Swedish traveller, at the end of the last century, have recently been deciphered and published from photographic copies, together with a very able explanation by the distinguished Secretary of the Kongelige Nordiske Oldskrift-Selskab, M. C. C. Rafn, who has shown that the inscription records the capture of the Piræus by no less a person than King Harold Harðráða, who, before he mounted the throne of Norway, was captain of the Varangians at Constantinople. See Antiquarisk Tidsskrift, 1855-57. Kbh., 1857. "En Nordisk Runeindskrift i Piræus, med Forklaring af C. C. Rafn."

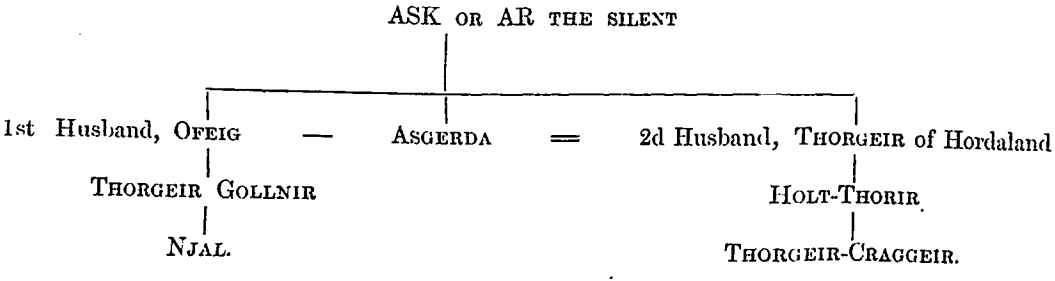
P. xxxiii, *note*, last line, *for* "mother" *read* "wife."

P. lxxvii. In the Introduction the account of Guðbrandr Vigfússon (Tímatal, p. 286) has been followed as to the relationship which existed between Asgerda, Njal, and Thorgeir Craggeir. That account is based on the following passages from Landnáma, p. 279, Kph., 1843 :—"Ofeig was the name of a man of rank in Romsdale province; he had to wife Asgerda, the daughter of Ask the silent. Ofeig fell out with King Harold Fairhair, and busked him for an Iceland voyage; but just as he was "boun," king Harold sent men to him, and his life was taken; but Asgerda fared out to Iceland with their children, and along with her Thorolf, her base-born brother. Asgerda took land between Selialandsmull and Markfleet, and all Langaness up as far as Ioldustone (or Auldustone) and set up her abode to the north in

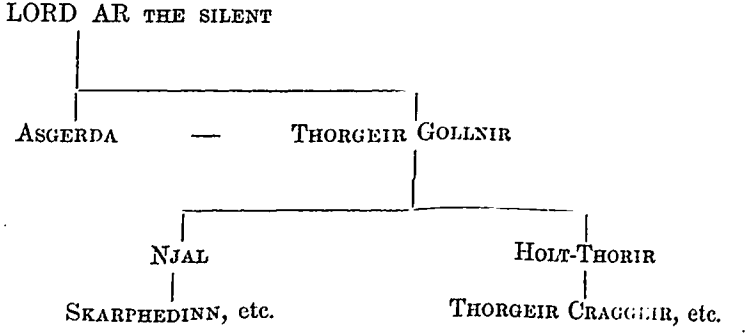
Kataness. The children of Ofeig and Asgerda were Thorgeir Gollnir and Thorstein bottle-beard, Thorbjörn the quiet and Alof Ellidashield, whom Thorberg Cornmull had to wife. . . . Thorolf, the brother of Asgerda, took land at her counsel to the west of the Fleet between the two Deildarwaters, and dwelt at Thorolf's-fell; there he reared Thorgeir Gollnir, Asgerda's son, who dwelt there afterwards; his son (Thorgeir's) was Njal, who was burnt inside his house." A little earlier in the same chapter, p. 278, occurs the following passage :—" Thorgeir of Hordaland, the son of Bard Minglehorn, fared from Viggjar in Drontheim to Iceland. He bought land from Asgeir fishhook between Lambfellswater and Ersewater, and set up his abode at Holt. A few winters (years) after he got Asgerda to wife, the daughter of Ask the silent, and their sons were Thorgrim the big and Holt-Thorir, the father of Thorleif crow and Craggeir." According to these statements, Thorgeir Gollnir and Holt-Thorir would have been half-brothers by the same mother, Asgerda, who would have been Njal's grandmother, while Njal and Thorgeir Craggeir would have been first cousins.

On the other hand, nothing can be more positive than the statement of our Saga, that Asgerda, the daughter of Lord Ar the silent, was Njal's mother, that Thorgeir Gelling or Gollnir was Njal's father, and that another son of Asgerda's was Holt-Thorir, the father of Thorgeir crow and Craggeir. By this account Njal and Thorgeir Craggeir would have stood in the relation of uncle and nephew, and it is remarkable that Thorgeir Craggeir himself (II., p. 190) calls Njal his father's brother, and Njal's sons his cousins. In spite of Landnáma we think that the account in the Saga, so far as the story itself is concerned, is the more reasonable of the two statements, especially as, if Njal and Thorgeir Craggeir were really first cousins, the one must have been nearly forty years older than the other; but if they are regarded as uncle and nephew, it would seem perfectly natural that a nephew of forty should be the avenger of an uncle of eighty.

According to Landnáma.



According to the Saga.



P. cxiv. *For* "máttmáll" *read* "náttmál."

Saga I. P. 1, *note, for* "Olaf" *read* "Oleif." Pp. 3, 4. "High Court." This court is the same as "Lögretta" or "Court of Laws."

14. According to Munch, NH. I. 755, Earl Arnvid fled from Vermeland and not from Jemtland.

29. *For* "Reykriverdale," in this and other places *read* "Reykiardale."

47. "For one oath shall not become all oaths," a proverb taken from the Law, and meaning "there is an exception to every rule." Comp. Sveinbjörn Egilsson Dict. *sub voce* eiðr.

75. *For* "Oxwater" *read* "Axewater."

80. The "his" in the passage "His mother's name," etc. refers to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, not to Ellidagrim.

83. Biarmaland, the reference to the foot-note is wanting.

91. "Helmrod" in the verses is a periphrasis for a sword.

102. "Thorkatla Asgrim Ellidagrim's son's daughter." The Saga sometimes calls this woman Thorkatla and sometimes Thorhalla, though more often the latter. Guðbrandr Vigfússon, Tímatal, doubts whether Helgi was married at this time, and suggests that this might be Thorkatla Asgrim's wife and not Thorhalla his daughter. Comp. Introduction, p. lxxxvi.

147. "Thord Longbeard." In another place (see p. 80) the Saga speaks of Thord as though he were Skeggi's son; here "Skeggi the bearded," or "Longbeard," is used as a nickname, and there is a link less in the genealogy.

151. "The Side." The description of "the Side" in the note is not exact. "The Side" was the Hillside in Skaptarfell's Sýsla between the river Skaptá and Skaptarfell; beyond the river, between it and the sea was Meðalland (Middleland).

159. "Hallkell, thy grandfather, who was the greatest of champions." This Hallkell was the half-brother of Kettlebjörn the old. He slew Grim of Grimsness and took his landnám. Comp. Introduction, p. lxxix.

P. 177. "Gunnar leapt off his horse," rather "slipped off his horse." Comp. p. 236.

196. *For* "Knafaholes" *read* "Knafahills" here and in the other passages in which the name occurs.

200. *For* "holes" *read* "hills."

204. *For* "Gunner" *read* "Gunnar."

235. *For* "Olof Kettle's son" *read* "Olaf Kettle's son."

248. *For* "Horsebeck" *read* "Hestbeck."

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

VOL. II.

P. 20. In the last line, *for* "room" *read* "hall."

22. "Either that I will tell where thou art." By so doing, according to legal custom, Hrapp would have cleared himself of his own outlawry.

24. "Thorgerda Shrinebride." This divinity was the daughter of Helgi or Haleygr, a mythical king of Halogaland or Helgeland. This province, the name of which means "The Holy Land," seems to have been the seat of a peculiar worship. (Comp. Völsaþáttr, published by Guðbrandr Vigfússon, together with Bárðar Saga Snaefellsáss, and other romantic pieces, Kph. 1860). Thorgerda, who was also called "Holgabrud" or "the Bride of Helgeland, was worshipped, together with her sister Irpa (the fair), by the families which sprang from Helgeland. Earl Hacon's father Sigurd was so descended. Her father's name occurs in our Saga, Vol. ii. p. 115, in the genealogy of Gudmund the powerful. Comp. Færeyinga Saga, ch. 23, where an account of Thorgerda sitting in Earl Hacon's shrine at Ladir will be found. It was a kerchief or snood, "falld," and not a wimple that she had on her head.

50. "Listeners do not often hear good of themselves," the literal meaning of the original is rather "many are worse spoken of than they would choose."

56. "Twelve ells, about twenty-four feet," etc. This would

be according to the length of the present Norse ell, but there is reason to believe that the old Norse ell was not more than an English foot and a half. The width of Skarphedinn's leap would therefore be eighteen feet. Comp. Appendix, II. 358 and 398.

P. 81. "But still ye run great risk," etc. These words of Flosi seem rather to allude to the danger which existed between Hauskuld's family and Njal's, on account of Thrain's slaying.

92. "Torch," Skriðljós, perhaps more probably means a lantern. Comp., Bergbúa Þáttr, Bárðar Saga Snæfellsáss, p. 124, Kph., 1860.

105. "A dark horse." The Icelandic, "vanfoli," or "váfoli," answers exactly to this sporting term. The horse was four years old, but Mord called it an untried foal.

105. "Folkmote." This was the "Leið," or "Leet," in the autumn.

121. Chap. cxv. In this chapter, the Saga writer seems to have applied the arrangement of the Icelandic Skáli in the twelfth or thirteenth century to the time of Njal. The "sitting-room," or "stofa," into which Flosi went, was on the dais or "þverpallr," and by the description which follows of Hildigunna's going backwards and forwards to the "hall," it is clear that the writer supposed that the þverpallr, at the eastern end of the Skáli or hall, was cut off from the body of the hall; but we know that this was not the case in the tenth century. Flosi might have had a high seat set for him on the dais, but that would only have been on a raised platform at the eastern end, but not in a separate room cut off from the rest of the hall. In the hall of such a man as Hauskuld, there would, we may be sure, have been ample room for Hildigunna to

go to and fro, without being observed. Comp. Introduction, xcix, c.

P. 124. "Women's counsel is ever cruel," "Köld eru kvennaráð," literally "cold," or "cold-blooded are women's redes."

124. "Holtford," on Thurso-water.

139. Adalsyssla, Icel. Aðalsýsla, the great or main province or government. According to Munch in Fagrskinna, see Glossary, it answers to the modern Esthonia.

152. *For* "Hill of Laws" *read* "Court of Laws."

153. When it is said that Flosi and the sons of Sigfus came "from the east" from their booths to the Court of Laws, and that Njal and his sons came "from the west," this is another proof that Flosi's booth or Byrgir's booth was on the east side of Axewater. Comp. Introduction cxxx, foll.

164. "And so fares it with Flosi's redes
As this flaming brand flies;"
Sveinbjörn, Egilsson Dict., under "Kefli," interprets these lines "ratio Flosii similis est volubili cylindro;" "Flosi's redes are like a rolling wheel or roller;" and he compares with them the maxim in Pythagoras—"ὡς δὲ κύλινδροι | ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλα φέρονται." The translator has, however, thought it more natural to compare Flosi's swift and burning counsel with the flaming firebrand which the apparition hurled towards the spot where the burning of Njal and his sons took place.

185. The Rangriver, so often mentioned in the Saga, is the eastern branch of the river, which now runs in two streams. This eastern branch rushes between steep scarped banks, across which it is easy to converse when it is quite impossible to pass it.

297. "In unclipped coin;" perhaps this merely means "without any deduction."

P. 314. " The Hundred." This is the fruitful " Hèrað" or " District," which since Njal's time has been so cruelly devastated by eruptions from the Skapta-Jokul.

322. " Swanlauga." Unless this is another name for the same woman, Earl Gilli must have married two daughters of Earl Sigurd. Comp. above, p. 40, where it is said that Earl Sigurd gave his sister Nereida to Earl Gilli.

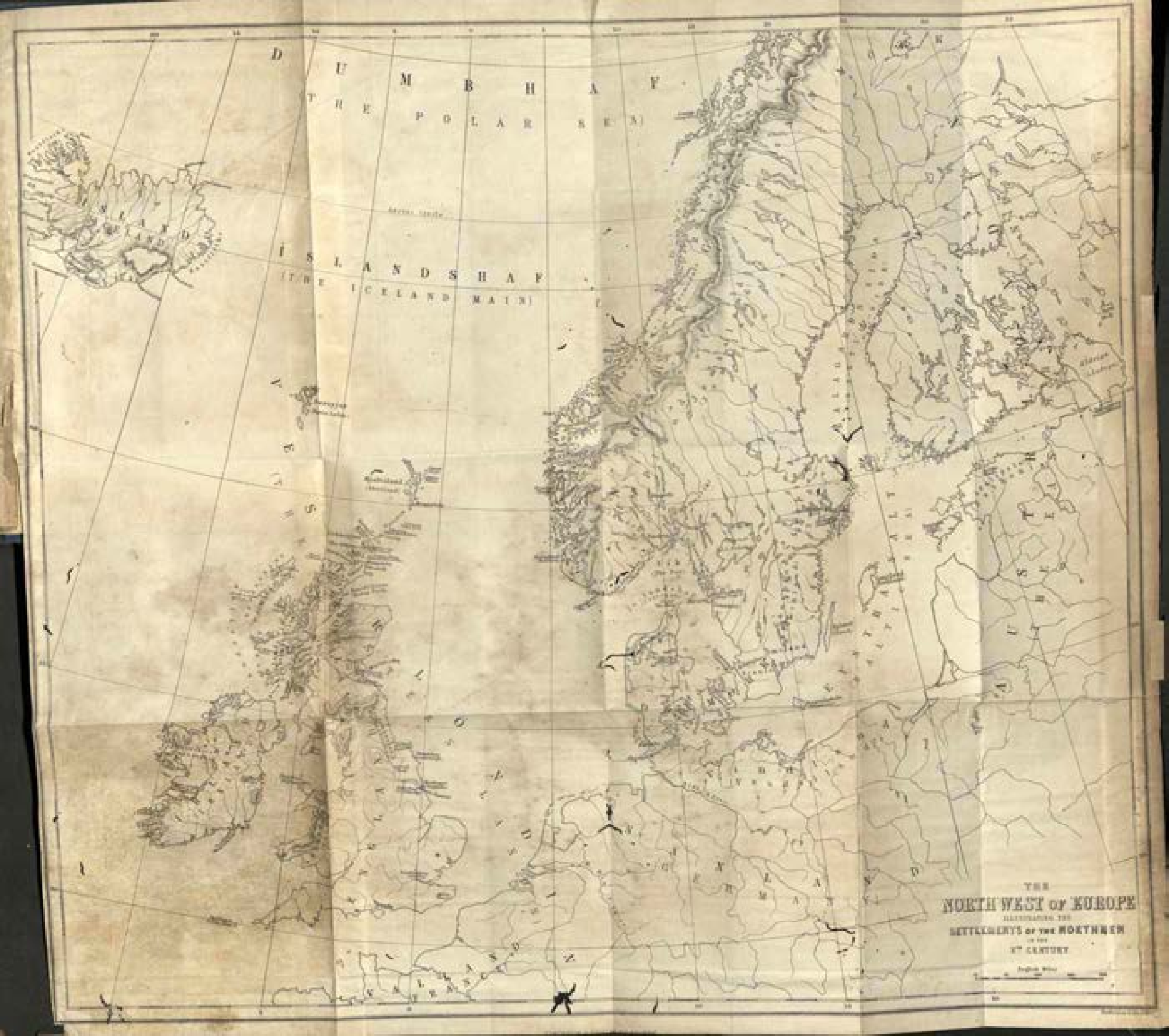
323. " Connaught," a mistake of the Saga for Kincora. Comp. Introduction, p. cxcii.

336. " 'T is fittest that the beggar should bear the bag." For an older form of this proverb see Maurer Bek. des N. S. I., 327.

347. *For* " sitting-room" *read* " hall."

348. *For* " room" *read* " hall."

THE END.


D U M B H A F
THE POLAR SEA
I S L A N D S H A F
(THE ICELAND MAIN)
THE
NORTH WEST OF EUROPE
ILLUSTRATING THE
SETTLEMENTS OF THE NORTHMEN
IN THE
9TH CENTURY

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